

JSD

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FORWARD'S
JOURNAL

THE AUTHORITY ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

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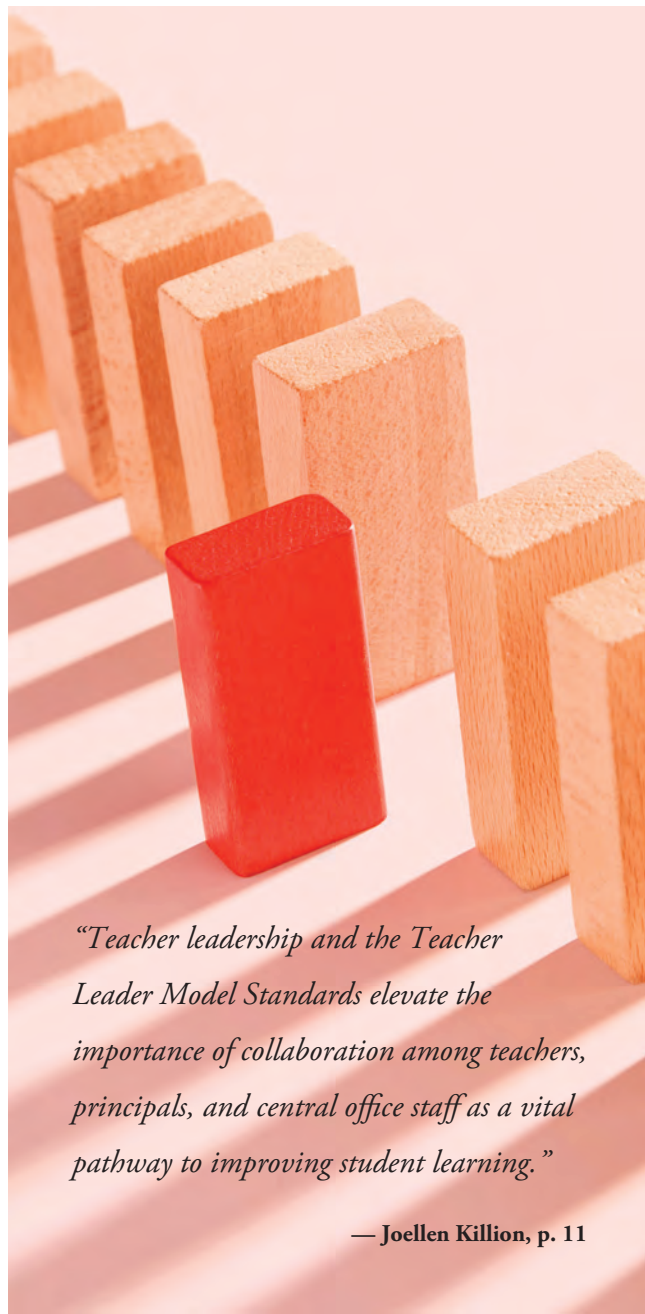
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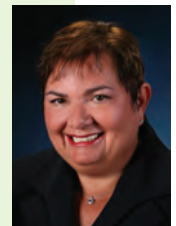
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BY STEPHANIE HIRSH



With the growth of teacher leadership, the word 'expert' sheds its negative image

I've noticed that the word "expert" has a bad connotation in our field sometimes. When we talk about professional learning, expert can imply someone from outside a school swooping in to offer, for a fee, his or her wisdom from on high. In the most exaggerated versions of this image, the expert doesn't adapt messages to fit particular contexts or consider other

points of view. While this is certainly a caricature, there's a reason we often hear the word so-called in front of the word expert: "We had a so-called expert here last week telling us what we're doing wrong."

Fortunately, as we shift our understanding of what makes a real

difference for schools, we can reclaim the word "expert" as a useful one. When we talk about the experts we know personally and professionally, we use the word with respect. When policy documents outline career continuums, expert (or master) teachers typically have demonstrated their knowledge and skills over the course of many years in leading successful classrooms and supporting colleagues.

•
Tracy Crow (tracy.crow@learningforward.org) is associate director of publications for Learning Forward.

The idea of tapping the expertise that resides in schools underlies so much of what Learning Forward knows about effective professional learning. The school-based cycle of continuous improvement, central to our definition of professional learning, relies not only on data about student and adult needs but also on a culture of shared expertise, where teams of teachers openly examine the practices that work to improve student learning. Expertise from within and beyond the school ensures that collaborative professional learning creates change and sustains growth over time. That so-called expert who flew in may indeed have a lot to offer the school — if the school knows how to ask for the right kind of help and follow up over time to integrate the new knowledge into practice.

The teacher leader is at the heart of bringing expertise to the classroom and the school. Teacher leaders, in the varied recognized and informal roles they play in schools and school systems, ensure that we tap the considerable expertise resident in buildings. The strategies teacher leaders use to spread expertise from room to room include:

- Deliberately developing their expertise over time;
- Openly sharing what they know with other teachers informally and in structured learning experiences;
- Examining student work and discussing the teaching and learning involved;
- Contributing to a culture of trust,

respect, and candor;

- Offering and seeking out valuable resources;
- Demonstrating lessons and strategies in team meetings and in classrooms;
- Letting others know when they need help and being open to others' ideas;
- Seeking support from principals and central office administrators; and
- Stepping in to support colleagues when they see they are struggling.

There are many other ways that the real experts in schools share what they know for the benefit of students and teachers alike. And as the authors in this issue of *JSD* demonstrate, the body of expertise about the concept of teacher leadership is growing significantly. Educators now know more about what it means to be a teacher leader, and more importantly, about the kinds of learning and support that develop skillful teacher leaders. Thanks to the work of the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, there are now model standards that explicate the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and behaviors of teacher leaders. See p. 16 for excerpts from these recently released standards (with gratitude to ETS for permission).

Who is the expert you turn to? How are you ensuring others have access to expertise? We'd like to hear your story any time. ■

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STANDARDS IN AUSTRALIA National Professional Standards for Teachers

Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, February 2011

Representing an analysis of effective practice by teachers throughout Australia, these standards are intended to guide teacher professional learning, practice, and engagement. The document outlines what teachers are expected to know and be able to do at four career stages. The standards can inform teachers' professional learning goals and provide a framework to help teachers evaluate their learning

and progress. Seven standards are organized within three broad domains: professional knowledge, professional practice, and professional engagement.

www.aitsl.edu.au

ONE DISTRICT'S WORK IN DEPTH Professional Learning Teams: 2009-10 School-Based Policy Implementation Study

*Wake County Public School System,
November 2010*

District policy in the Wake County (N.C.) schools called for districtwide implementation of professional learning teams. This research report covers the initiative, with information about impact on student achievement and collaborative culture. The report also offers many details about how the district carried out the implementation and includes case studies of specific learning teams and the voices of several participating practitioners.

www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research



BRING OUT THE BEST The Elusive Talent Strategy: An Excellent Teacher for Every Student

Carnegie Corporation of New York, Winter 2011

A call to rethink how teachers are recruited, developed, and rewarded, this report discusses the challenge of the strategic management of human capital and how to meet that challenge to ensure that students have effective teachers. The authors offer specific strategies and highlight promising models in improving teacher preparation, professional learning, and retooled data systems to inform human capital decisions.

<http://carnegie.org/talentstrategy>



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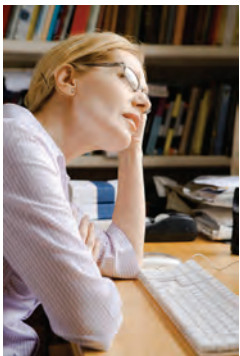
*Math and Science
Partnership*

A project of EDC and Horizon Research funded by the National Science Foundation, this web site offers research briefs, case studies, presentations, and research instruments from a range of Math and Science Partnership projects. The research briefs, covering content knowledge, teacher leaders, and the role of faculty in professional development, are summaries of what researchers learned in their projects. Geared toward practitioners with practical advice as well as extensive background information, each brief includes insights from educators in the field.

www.mspkmd.net

EVALUATING COSTS**High-Quality Professional Development:
Effectively Allocating Resources***National Comprehensive Center for Teaching Quality,
February 2011*

This research and policy brief outlines recent research, discusses factors in resource allocation, offers district-level examples, and includes self-assessment tools. Created to help system- and state-level education leaders consider the effective use of scarce resources to support high-quality professional learning, the brief includes a framework for considering all associated costs for professional development and information about evaluating professional learning.

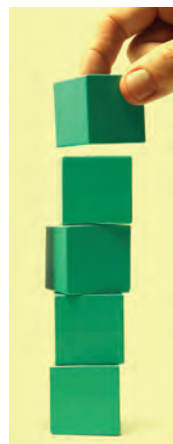
www.tqsource.org**BUILDING SCOTLAND'S TEACHERS****Teaching Scotland's Future: Report of a Review of Teacher Education in Scotland***The Scottish Government, February 2011*

Commissioned by the Scottish government, this report is the result of literature reviews, interviews, and educator surveys on the state of teacher learning in Scotland, including teacher preparation and professional development. The author writes that Scotland's teaching force is strong and that government policies have created a strong foundation upon which to build for the future. The report offers 50 recommendations to build teacher capacity for further improvement. Recommendations cover the needs of educators as 21st-century teachers, the context of teaching in Scotland, learning at different career stages, and leadership development. Specific recommendations for professional development include a need for a shift to more local, team-based approaches centered on collaboration

and self evaluation, and a need for more planning and evaluation tied to student progress.

www.ltscotland.org.uk/resources/t/genericresource_tcm4654352.asp**5 STEPS TOWARD TURNAROUND****Turning Around the Nation's Lowest-Performing Schools***Center for American Progress, January 2011*

For more than a decade, Education Resource Strategies (ERS) has worked with urban districts to transform the use of people, time, money, and technology so that all students receive the support they need to succeed. Based on this work, ERS believes that successful school turnaround also requires district turnaround — fundamental changes in the way districts think about and provide support for schools. ERS has identified five steps that districts can take in designing and implementing school improvement programs that will increase the probability that their efforts will achieve lasting improvement. This report outlines the five steps in detail.

www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/02/five_steps.html**JSD STAFF**

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No more nice guy



"If a team collaborates without addressing and working to shift the culture of nice, the teacher leader puts the team at risk of gaining no insight into its own practice, obtaining no results (or unsustainable results) for students, going through the motions of collaboration, and ultimately dismissing the process as a waste of time."

Read more in **"When nice won't suffice"** on p. 45.



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www.learningforward.org/news/jsd/



The future of teacher leaders

“**Even when** effective teachers are selected to help lead schools, most end up working without any coherent career development system that includes regular opportunities to accept new challenges and spread their growing expertise.

“**School principals** are still asked to do too much — managing the three Bs of ‘business, books, and bottoms’ (i.e. transportation, distributing resources, and student discipline) while they are also expected to become adept leaders of their school’s instructional program, no matter the content area or specialty involved.

“**While more principals** have been trained to examine student data and organize school schedules and resources to increase standardized test scores, few are prepared to develop and utilize teacher expertise and leadership for more ambitious student outcomes.

“**And too many** school leadership development programs of today pit principals against teachers (and the school administration against the teacher union) instead of figuring out how to elevate the potential of both and establish strategies for working together toward 21st-century, results-oriented schools.”

Source: *Teaching 2030: What We Must Do for Our Students and Our Public Schools ... Now and in the Future*, by Barnett Berry and the TeacherSolutions 2030 Team, Teachers College Press, 2011.

Roles for teacher leaders and school-based coaches

In their book *Taking the Lead: New Roles for Teachers and School-Based Coaches* (NSDC, 2006), Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison define 10 roles of school-based teacher leaders. The book explores the knowledge and skills educators need to effectively lead in these roles as well as related challenges and useful strategies.

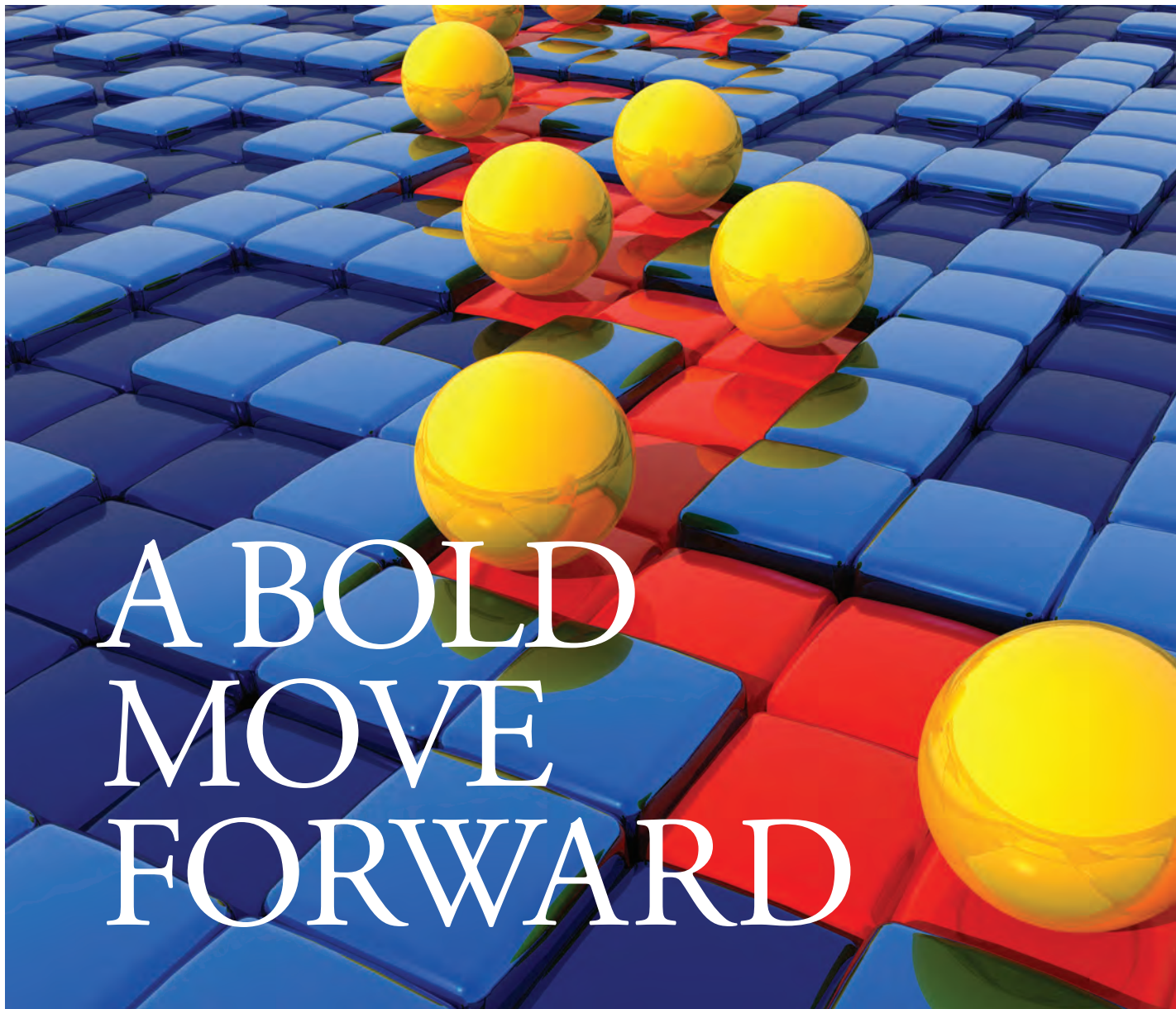
School-based role	Purpose
Resource provider	To expand teachers' use of a variety of resources to improve instruction.
Data coach	To ensure that student achievement data drives instructional decisions at the classroom and school level.
Curriculum specialist	To increase the quality and effectiveness of classroom instruction.
Instructional specialist	To align instruction with curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
Classroom supporter	To increase the quality and effectiveness of classroom instruction.
Mentor	To increase instructional skills of the novice teacher and support schoolwide induction activities.
Learning facilitator	To design collaborative, job-embedded, standards-based professional learning.
School leader	To work collaboratively with the school's formal leadership to design, implement, and assess change initiatives to ensure alignment and focus on intended results.
Catalyst for change	To create disequilibrium with the current state as an impetus to explore alternatives to current practice.
Learner	To model continuous learning, to keep current, and to be a thought leader in the school.



Consider how your school or district fulfills the leadership roles listed and answer the following questions, either in collaboration with a leadership team or in preparation for discussion with colleagues.

How do we fill the roles and achieve the purposes listed in our school(s)?	Are educators acknowledged, either formally or informally, as they do this work?	What support do we provide to ensure educators are skilled in filling these roles? Where are there gaps?	Which roles go unfilled? How does this impact the effectiveness of our teachers or teacher teams?	What actions does this suggest we need to take as a school or district?	What resources or additional information would help us determine next steps?
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Source: Adapted from *Taking the Lead: New Roles for Teachers and School-Based Coaches*, by Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison, NSDC, 2006.



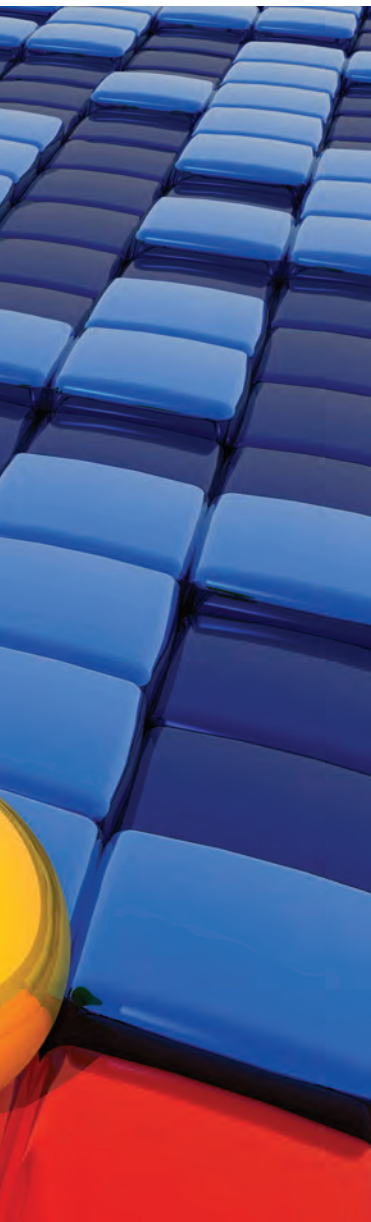
A BOLD MOVE FORWARD

By Joellen Killion

Teacher leaders are vital to establishing a collaborative school culture that fosters continuous improvement of teaching and student achievement. According to Learning Forward's definition of professional development, effective professional learning "is conducted among educators at the school and facilitated by well-prepared school principals and/or school-based professional development coaches, mentors, master teach-

ers, or other teacher leaders" (www.learningforward.org/standfor/definition.cfm). Teacher leaders model, facilitate, advocate for, and support ongoing professional learning within schools.

Learning Forward's focus on teacher leadership began in 2004 with the advent of its first national academy for school-based staff developers, as they were called then. Over the last seven years, Learning Forward's support of teacher leaders has focused more on teachers who support their colleagues by serving in one or more of many roles with one of many diverse job titles. Whether as coaches, instructional facilitators, teacher leaders, or school-based



CONSORTIUM OUTLINES NEW STANDARDS FOR TEACHER LEADERS

staff developers, highly dedicated and well-prepared teacher leaders work in these roles. They choose to make a difference beyond their classroom, some while remaining in their classrooms full- or part-time, and others who leave their role of classroom teacher to serve in one of these new teacher leadership roles.

A fundamental belief underlying Learning Forward's work is the importance of collective responsibility. This belief acknowledges that no school or system will succeed based on the leadership of a single hero leader. Deep change requires that all parties within a school or school system work collaboratively and productively to

realize results for every student. Teacher leadership and the Teacher Leader Model Standards elevate the importance of collaboration among teachers, principals, and central office staff as a vital pathway to improving student learning. (See the model standards on pp. 16-24.)

In *The Learning Educator: A New Era for Professional Learning*, Stephanie Hirsh and I (2007) describe eight principles that guide effective professional development. These principles are the foundational beliefs about professional learning that describe Learning Forward's approach to educator learning. Among the eight principles are several relevant to teacher lead-

ership. The Teacher Leader Model Standards offer an opportunity to revisit several of these principles to explain why Learning Forward is committed to developing and supporting teacher leaders who serve as chief learners and facilitators of professional learning within their schools and districts.

While all eight principles are relevant to teacher leadership, three serve as the foundation for teacher leadership (see all eight in the sidebar on p. 14).

LEADERSHIP: Leaders are responsible for building the capacity in individuals, teams, and organizations to be leaders and learners.

The principle of leadership encompasses both who leads and what leaders do. "Leaders exist throughout the system. If leadership rests in the hands of an elite few, little deep and sustainable change will occur" (Hirsh & Killion, 2007, p. 37). Leaders at all levels – district, school, and classroom — contribute to improved learning, and communities of leaders are critical to creating lasting change, just as communities of teachers compound their learning and impact. "Students will reap substantial rewards when leaders share responsibility for leading, recognize and build on the unique contribution of each person, and focus their efforts on quality teaching and learning. And, more importantly, when all leaders learn, students learn" (Hirsh & Killion, 2007).

Teacher leaders have a single guiding purpose — to build capacity in others. They use their talents to influence, shape, support, and catalyze change that results in increased student achievement. Their actions reveal their fundamental belief that the more they build capacity in others, the more they contribute to sustaining long-term, deep transformation that allows others to address today's challenges and to be prepared for facing those that arise tomorrow.

REFLECTIONS OF A TEACHER LEADERS' LEADER

As I write this article, I reflect on how apropos the theme of teacher leadership is for my last *JSD* article before my retirement. Throughout my career, I have had multiple opportunities to support and advance teacher leadership. I was a teacher leader early in my career and found tremendous professional satisfaction in the work I did. Later as a school and district leader, I worked closely with teacher leaders who served within their schools and beyond in multiple capacities as coaches, program leaders, facilitators of professional development, mentors, department and grade-level chairs, leaders of teacher residency programs, and facilitators of special projects. At Learning Forward, I have the honor of interacting with teacher leaders

who have been members of our Coaches Academy or participated in our programs and services, and who work every day to make a substantial difference in their schools and districts.

In these significant roles, teacher leaders use their dedication to student achievement, professionalism, expertise, and commitment to the profession to facilitate change that refines teachers' professional practice, increase student achievement, and build collaborative communities to support teacher and student learning. They work in partnership with school and district administrators to identify and study complex challenges within



Joellen Killion

schools and districts and lead innovations to address the identified challenges. As teachers first and leaders second, as their name suggests, they model salient practices and dispositions that allow them to engage peers in collaborative learning to strengthens teachers' practice and increases student learning. The expertise of teacher leaders and school administrators within schools is the most logical and readily available source of innovative approaches to our most intractable challenges in schools. Teacher leadership holds tremendous promise and potential for building school cultures within which all students and educators thrive. Now it the time to turn inward and tap the rich and readily available resource within schools to inquire, discover, and spread successful strategies to ensure that each student achieves.

— Joellen Killion

As leaders, they work not to direct the work of others, but rather to build others' knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices to lead their own reform or improvement efforts. They strive to be invisible, to give away all that they know and have for the benefit of others, and to leave interdependence, empowerment, and efficacy in their wake. As leaders, they are interested not in notoriety or fame, but rather in making a difference for others.

EXPERTISE: Communities can solve even their most complex problems by tapping internal expertise.

Today's educators are facing enormous challenges. In their efforts to meet student needs and the demands of their communities and education policy makers, they seek solutions to their most difficult challenges. Their search often turns outward rather than inward. Educators have long depended on external expertise, and entire industries are based on this.

A foundational assumption in education has proven faulty far too many times. That assumption is that a single solution to even the most complex problem can work effectively at scale in all schools and that, if it is implemented universally, it will solve every occurrence of the problem. "Because schools are so

different from one another in terms of staff and student characteristics, resources, parental and community support and involvement, and leadership, the assumption that a solution that worked in one school or classroom is going to work in another is faulty. That assumption has proven unsuccessful as a means for rapid and even lasting change in the nation's public schools. A more appropriate approach is to maintain the focus on what works within the defined community and to figure out how the community wants to use the information to improve its own results. Information of this sort is usually not transferable across communities. Tapping teacher expertise within a school increases the chance of identifying solutions that can be adopted throughout the school, sustained for longer periods of time, and implemented without extensive additional resources" (Hirsh & Killion, p. 88).

"Allowing solutions to emerge from within engenders commitment within the community rather than resistance. 'When identification of a superior method is imposed, not self-discovered, cries of "We're not them" or "It just won't work here" predictably limit acceptance. By contrast, a design that allows a community to learn from its own hidden wisdom is, among other things, respectful. Innovators and adopters share the same

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DNA. Community members invest sweat equity in discovering the positive deviants, and, in the process, they become partners to change' ” (Pascale & Sternin, p. 3) (Hirsh & Killion, p. 90-91).

When educators are given permission and professional respect to inquire into their own practice, to discover what works within their unique communities, they not only solve the presenting problem, but they also refine their expertise with inquiry, problem solving, innovation, evaluation, and improvement efforts. Within these empowered communities, teacher leaders serve as facilitators, resource providers, and catalysts for change.

COLLABORATION: Collaboration among educators builds shared responsibility and improves student learning.

Expertise depends on skillfulness in collaboration. Collaboration leads to building collective responsibility among educators so that every student, not just some, succeeds. Collaboration is enhanced with structures, processes, and facilitation. Teacher leaders can bring those into networks of teachers in schools, districts, and beyond.

“Schools will be far more likely to be able to provide great teaching for every student when collaboration among educators is routine and daily. In addition, when all educators in a school assume a collective responsibility for their own and students’ success, we fulfill our moral commitment to children. ... Collaboration among educators improves learning opportunities for students. In many schools, a culture of collaboration and collective responsibility is replacing the culture of isolation. Educators are recognizing that all students benefit when they pool their expertise. They also realize that educating all students requires more knowledge and effort than any one individual educator possesses” (Hirsh & Killion, p. 100).

Within collaborative teams, teacher leaders guide professional learning, facilitate problem solving, promote reflection, and challenge assumptions. Collaboration deepens understanding and builds a culture of continuous improvement driven by a healthy dissatisfaction or dissonance to stimulate intellectual dialogues, research, inquiry, and reflection.

Collaboration will not solve every problem in schools today, yet it is one way to bring to the forefront what every educator knows and to use that information to improve teaching and learning. Roland Barth challenges educators when he states, “I wonder how many children’s lives might be saved if we educators disclosed what we know to each other” (Barth, 2001, p. 60). When educators commit to developing their own and their colleagues’ expertise so that every student in the school achieves, students benefit. Teacher leaders take an active role in facilitating and tapping teachers’ expertise.

Collaboration deepens understanding and builds a culture of continuous improvement.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

These eight principles provide the grounding for much of Learning Forward’s approach to professional learning. Those in red are the foundation for teacher leadership.

- 1. Principles:** Principles shape our thoughts, words, and actions.
- 2. Diversity:** Diversity strengthens an organization and improves its decisions.
- 3. Leadership:** Leaders are responsible for building the capacity in individuals, teams, and organizations to be leaders and learners.
- 4. Planning:** Ambitious goals lead to powerful actions and remarkable results.
- 5. Focus:** Maintaining the focus of professional learning on teaching and student learning produces academic success.
- 6. Impact:** Evaluation strengthens performance and results.
- 7. Expertise:** Communities can solve even their most complex problems by tapping internal expertise.
- 8. Collaboration:** Collaboration among educators builds shared responsibility and improves student learning.

Source: Hirsh & Killion, 2007.

As partners in the leadership of schools, school systems, and other education agencies, teacher leaders support students, colleagues, schools, districts, and communities beyond the walls of their classroom. When the scope of teacher leaders’ work expands, the benefits expand exponentially. Through the strong partnership between teacher leaders and school administrators, schools become learning organizations in which everyone learns and grows.

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By the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium

Leadership by teachers is essential to serving the needs of students, schools, and the teaching profession. To that end, the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium has developed Teacher Leader Model Standards to codify, promote, and support teacher leadership as a vehicle to transform schools for the needs of the 21st century.

The Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium invites the profession, the public, and stakeholders to engage in dialogue about the various forms and dimensions of teacher leadership as well as the variety of contexts in which teacher leadership can be vital to serving the needs of students, schools, and the teaching profession.

The Teacher Leader Model Standards can be used to guide the preparation of experienced teachers to assume leadership roles such as resource providers, instructional specialists, curriculum specialists, classroom supporters, learning facilitators, mentors, school team leaders, and data coaches (Killion & Harrison, 2006).

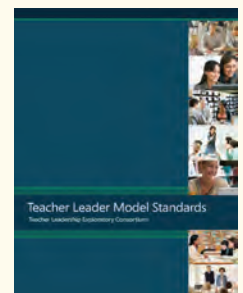
They can also serve to reinforce the role of higher education in preparing

preservice teachers to become members of professional learning communities and develop critical skills of inquiry, communication, and facilitation.

We describe the knowledge base needed by the teacher leader in order to meet the performance expectations related to each domain. The functions then describe in more detail key actions and practices related to each domain. It is not expected that an individual teacher leader should or could embody the many dimensions of teacher leadership outlined in the teacher leader model standards. There are many contexts in which teachers can assume leadership roles, and it is our hope that the Teacher Leader Model Standards will help expand opportunities for leadership

Excerpted from *Teacher Leader Model Standards* by the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium. Reprinted with permission from ETS. Find the entire document online at www.teacherleaderstandards.org.

The full standards document includes vignettes of teacher leadership, considerations and strategies for policies and practices that support standards implementation, glossary of terms, and a crosswalk between these standards and the ISLLC 2008 Educational Leadership Policy Standards.



within the teaching profession.

The Teacher Leader Model Standards consist of seven domains describing the many dimensions of teacher leadership:

- **Domain I:** Fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning.
- **Domain II:** Accessing and using research to improve practice and student achievement.
- **Domain III:** Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement.
- **Domain IV:** Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning.
- **Domain V:** Using assessments and data for school and district improvement.
- **Domain VI:** Improving outreach and collaboration with families and community.
- **Domain VII:** Advocating for student learning and the profession.

NEW PARADIGM FOR TEACHING

When the status quo is no longer an option at a struggling school, and the consequence of conformity yields persistent failure, it is time to move to a shared leadership model. Teacher leaders believe that all students can succeed. They also believe that all teachers need collaborative support to help students realize success (Robbins & Ramos-Pell, 2010).

Teacher leadership is an idea that is long overdue. Teacher leadership opportunities can help recruit talented individuals into the profession who might not otherwise go into teaching. Research indicates that in order to increase the likelihood that Gen Y teachers remain in the profession, they need opportunities to participate in decision making at the school and district level; a positive and supportive school culture that fosters teamwork and effective lines of communication; professional opportunities that include collaboration and technology; in-depth feedback and support from administrators and colleagues; time for regular collaboration; and fair pay and a differentiated pay structure that includes rewarding outstanding performance, acquiring new knowledge and skills, and assuming new roles and responsibilities (Behrstock & Clifford, 2009).

Furthermore, we must use the expertise that already exists in the teaching force by ensuring opportunities for recognition and specific leadership roles for those desiring the added responsibilities that come with leadership. We hope the Teacher Leader Model Standards in this document are a significant step in delineating the knowledge, skills, and competencies that teachers need in order to assume leadership roles in their schools, districts, and the profession.

ABOUT THE TEACHER LEADERSHIP EXPLORATORY CONSORTIUM

In May 2008, a group of concerned educators convened to examine current research and thinking about the critical leadership roles that teachers play in contributing to student and school success. These educators believe that teacher leadership is a potentially powerful strategy to promote effective, collaborative teaching practices in schools that lead to increased student achievement, improve decision making at the school and district level, and create a dynamic teaching profession for the 21st century.

This initial group subsequently expanded its membership and mission to form the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, which represents a broad array of education organizations, state education agencies, teacher leaders, principals, superintendents, and institutions of higher education (find a list of members in the full, online version of this document). This expanded group embarked on the development of model standards for teacher leadership in August 2008 and has now completed its work.

The purpose of these standards — like all model standards — is to stimulate dialogue among stakeholders of the teaching profession about what constitutes the knowledge, skills, and competencies that teachers need to assume leadership roles in their schools, districts, and the profession.

Model standards are often used in the development of curriculum, professional development, and standards for such entities as school districts, states, professional organizations, and institutions of higher education. These standards are designed to encourage professional discussion about what constitutes the full range of competencies that teacher leaders possess and how this form of leadership can be distinguished from, but work in tandem with, formal administrative leadership roles to support good teaching and promote student learning.

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Fostering a collaborative culture to support educator development and student learning.

The teacher leader understands the principles of adult learning and knows how to develop a collaborative culture of collective responsibility in the school.

The teacher leader uses this knowledge to promote an environment of collegiality, trust, and respect that focuses on continuous improvement in instruction and student learning.

Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Utilizes group processes to help colleagues* work collaboratively to solve problems, make decisions, manage conflict, and promote meaningful change;
- b. Models effective skills in listening, presenting ideas, leading discussions, clarifying, mediating, and identifying the needs of self and others in order to advance shared goals and professional learning;
- c. Employs facilitation skills to create trust among colleagues, develop collective wisdom, build ownership and action that supports student learning;
- d. Strives to create an inclusive culture where diverse perspectives are welcomed in addressing challenges; and
- e. Uses knowledge and understanding of different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and languages to promote effective interactions among colleagues.

* By colleagues, we mean members of the school community, including teachers, administrators, specialists, and others involved in the education of children at the school or district level.





Accessing and using research to improve practice and student learning.

The teacher leader understands how research creates new knowledge, informs policies and practices, and improves teaching and learning. The teacher leader models and facilitates the use of systematic inquiry as a critical component of teachers' ongoing learning and development.

Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Assists colleagues in accessing and using research in order to select appropriate strategies to improve student learning;
- b. Facilitates the analysis of student learning data, collaborative interpretation of results, and application of findings to improve teaching and learning;
- c. Supports colleagues in collaborating with higher education institutions and other organizations engaged in researching critical educational issues; and
- d. Teaches and supports colleagues to collect, analyze, and communicate data from their classrooms to improve teaching and learning.





Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement.

The teacher leader understands the evolving nature of teaching and learning, established and emerging technologies, and the school community.

The teacher leader uses this knowledge to promote, design, and facilitate job-embedded professional learning aligned with school improvement goals.

Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Collaborates with colleagues and school administrators to plan professional learning that is team-based, job-embedded, sustained over time, aligned with content standards, and linked to school/district improvement goals;
- b. Uses information about adult learning to respond to the diverse learning needs of colleagues by identifying, promoting, and facilitating varied and differentiated professional learning;
- c. Facilitates professional learning among colleagues;
- d. Identifies and uses appropriate technologies to promote collaborative and differentiated professional learning;
- e. Works with colleagues to collect, analyze, and disseminate data related to the quality of professional learning and its effect on teaching and student learning;
- f. Advocates for sufficient preparation, time, and support for colleagues to work in teams to engage in job-embedded professional learning;
- g. Provides constructive feedback to colleagues to strengthen teaching practice and improve student learning; and
- h. Uses information about emerging education, economic, and social trends in planning and facilitating professional learning.





Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning.

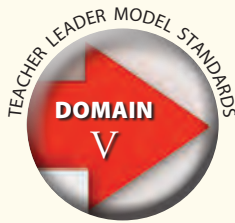
The teacher leader demonstrates a deep understanding of the teaching and learning processes and uses this knowledge to advance the professional skills of colleagues by being a continuous learner and modeling reflective practice based on student results. The teacher leader works collaboratively with colleagues to ensure instructional practices are aligned to a shared vision, mission, and goals.

Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Facilitates the collection, analysis, and use of classroom- and school-based data to identify opportunities to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment, school organization, and school culture;
- b. Engages in reflective dialogue with colleagues based on observation of instruction, student work, and assessment data and helps make connections to research-based effective practices;
- c. Supports colleagues' individual and collective reflection and professional growth by serving in roles such as a mentor, coach, and content facilitator;
- d. Serves as a team leader to harness the skills, expertise, and knowledge of colleagues to address curricular expectations and student learning needs;
- e. Uses knowledge of existing and emerging technologies to guide colleagues in helping students skillfully and appropriately navigate the universe of knowledge available on the Internet, use social media to promote collaborative learning, and connect with people and resources around the globe; and
- f. Promotes instructional strategies that address issues of diversity and equity in the classroom and ensures that individual student learning needs remain the central focus of instruction.





Promoting the use of assessments and data for school and district improvement.

The teacher leader is knowledgeable about current research on classroom- and school-based data and the design and selection of appropriate formative and summative assessment methods. The teacher leader shares this knowledge and collaborates with colleagues to use assessment and other data to make informed decisions that improve learning for all students and to inform school and district improvement strategies.

Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Increases the capacity of colleagues to identify and use multiple assessment tools aligned to state and local standards;
- b. Collaborates with colleagues in the design, implementation, scoring, and interpretation of student data to improve educational practice and student learning;
- c. Creates a climate of trust and critical reflection in order to engage colleagues in challenging conversations about student learning data that lead to solutions to identified issues; and
- d. Works with colleagues to use assessment and data findings to promote changes in instructional practices or organizational structures to improve student learning.





Improving outreach and collaboration with families and community.

The teacher leader understands that families, cultures, and communities have a significant impact on educational processes and student learning. The teacher leader works with colleagues to promote ongoing systematic collaboration with families, community members, business and community leaders, and other stakeholders to improve the educational system and expand opportunities for student learning.

Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Uses knowledge and understanding of the different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and languages in the school community to promote effective interactions among colleagues, families, and the larger community;
- b. Models and teaches effective communication and collaboration skills with families and other stakeholders focused on attaining equitable achievement for students of all backgrounds and circumstances;
- c. Facilitates colleagues' self-examination of their own understandings of community culture and diversity and how they can develop culturally responsive strategies to enrich the educational experiences of students and achieve high levels of learning for all students;
- d. Develops a shared understanding among colleagues of the diverse educational needs of families and the community; and
- e. Collaborates with families, communities, and colleagues to develop comprehensive strategies to address the diverse educational needs of families and the community.





Advocating for student learning and the profession.

The teacher leader understands how educational policy is made at the local, state, and national level as well as the roles of school leaders, boards of education, legislators, and other stakeholders in formulating those policies.

The teacher leader uses this knowledge to advocate for student needs and for practices that support effective teaching and increase student learning, and serves as an individual of influence and respect within the school, community, and profession.

Functions

THE TEACHER LEADER:

- a. Shares information with colleagues within and/or beyond the district regarding how local, state, and national trends and policies can impact classroom practices and expectations for student learning;
- b. Works with colleagues to identify and use research to advocate for teaching and learning processes that meet the needs of all students;
- c. Collaborates with colleagues to select appropriate opportunities to advocate for the rights and/or needs of students, to secure additional resources within the building or district that support student learning, and to communicate effectively with targeted audiences such as parents and community members;
- d. Advocates for access to professional resources, including financial support and human and other material resources, that allow colleagues to spend significant time learning about effective practices and developing a professional learning community focused on school improvement goals; and
- e. Represents and advocates for the profession in contexts outside of the classroom.





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5 STAGES ON THE PATH TO EQUITY

FRAMEWORK CHALLENGES
URBAN TEACHERS' DEFICIT
THINKING



By Sonia James-Wilson and Michele Hancock

“Teachers are leaders when they function in professional learning communities to effect student learning; contribute to school improvement; inspire excellence in practice; and empower stakeholders to participate in educational improvement” (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000). From an equity perspective, teachers also lead when they serve as change agents who collaborate to use equity-based approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners and to build on the strengths of their colleagues (James-Wilson, 2007). In both definitions, teacher leadership is inseparable from empowerment as teachers need to be empowered to lead and supported to sustain their efforts.

The five-stage empowerment trajectory is a framework for sustaining teacher leadership development programs. Researchers developed the framework as a result of a study focused on the ways in which teacher leaders in the Urban

Teacher Leadership Academy collaborated to recognize and challenge deficit thinking, and the influence they had on their colleagues’ thinking (Hancock, 2008). From 2005 to 2008, the academy was made possible through a partnership between the Rochester City School District and the University of Rochester and was developed and co-facilitated by the authors.

The Rochester City School District, located in western New York, serves 32,000 students in grades pre-K-12 and 10,000 adults. The students in the district are culturally diverse, with 64% black, 22% Hispanic, 11% white, and 3% Asian/Native American/East Indian/other. District facilities include 60 pre-K sites, 40 elementary schools, and 19 secondary schools. Poverty is one of the major challenges facing the district, with 84% of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunch, and in almost one-third of the schools, 90% of the students live in poverty.

THE URBAN TEACHER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

The mission of the Urban Teacher Leadership Acad-

emy was to develop teachers as leaders to influence others towards equity-based educational practices and school improvement. At the academy, teachers examined their own assumptions about diversity, leadership, and teaching and learning, and reflected on and internalized new understandings. Teachers applied to the academy in teams of three and worked with their colleagues to develop and implement equity-based school improvement projects. These projects were developed and piloted in the first year of the program, and implemented and evaluated in year two. The district also provided teams with a small budget to purchase required project materials.

One project helped to increase comprehension of grade-level vocabulary and communication skills, and encouraged parental involvement in school activities related to literacy. Through various school and community-based activities, families learned language development strategies they could use at home, and teachers participated in professional development to gain a deeper understanding and respect of students' home languages. In another school, a project increased teachers' awareness of their students' backgrounds. Staff traveled into the six communities where most of their students lived and participated in tours that parents led. As a result, they deepened their relationships with families, developed a greater appreciation of the obstacles many faced and the local supports available to them, and used their new understandings to make the curriculum more culturally responsive.

Academy performance standards reflect the six elements of the teacher leadership for equity framework (James-Wilson, 2007). They are also compatible with the seven essential standards of the district, those established by the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), and the Standards for Staff Development created by NSDC related to instructional leadership development and school-based professional development (Roy & Hord, 2003).

Specifically, the objectives of the academy program were to:

1. Prepare teacher leaders who are able to ensure equity for all students.
2. Encourage teachers to use inclusive leadership practices in schools.
3. Provide assistance to teacher leaders as they work to develop professional and inclusive school cultures.
4. Encourage teacher leaders to recognize, understand, and accept their role as "cultural workers."
5. Encourage teacher leaders to link their professional development to the school improvement goals of their buildings and the vision of the district.
6. Prepare teacher leaders who are able to provide professional development for others.

7. Prepare teacher leaders who are able to strengthen the ability of families to increase the academic achievement of their children.
8. Support teachers to develop the skills required to manage human and material resources in ways that ensure equity for all students.

THE FIVE-STAGE EMPOWERMENT TRAJECTORY

Despite the wide variety of school contexts within which academy participants worked, there were three key factors that contributed to their ability to lead equity-focused change, including:

- The ability to influence others to adopt instructional practices that support students' needs;
- The influence to change operational structures that were not in the best interest of students; and
- A school principal willing to share power and champion the work of teacher leaders, including the allocation of human and material resources, and defending the importance of their work in the face of skeptics.

In the research on which this article is based (Hancock, 2008), researchers used interviews and focus groups to gather data that help explain how district-sponsored programs provide a context within which these factors could emerge. From this data, researchers developed the five-stage empowerment trajectory to provide a conceptual framework for thinking about the ways in which districts and higher education institutions could collaborate to create programs that promote teacher leadership beyond the formal and technical roles most commonly in place in schools, such as department chairs, lead teachers, or curriculum specialists. Even though these stages are presented in a linear fashion, they are progressive and recurring. For example, even though nothing can happen until all parties are enabled (stage 1), the support required to initiate programs must be sustained throughout the program.

1 ENABLING

During this initial phase, a school district partners with a higher education institution to make a long-term commitment to develop and implement the teacher leadership program. During the establishment of this partnership, it is imperative that both institutions assign formal leaders to manage and facilitate the program, and that these individuals have the authority to make decisions related to the financial support of the program. The University of Rochester provided space, assisted with the recruitment of teachers, and James-Wilson (co-author), then a full-time faculty member, directed the program. As a district administrator, Hancock (co-author) co-facilitated the program as part of her regular duties.

During the analysis of data from the study, three cat-

egories emerged to describe the role of the principal related to the development of teacher leadership. First, principals need to motivate and inspire staff to work diligently to improve student outcomes. They also need to be able to relate to staff who are not directly involved, including school-based planning teams and other community stakeholders, to communicate the importance of promoting teacher growth and development. Finally, principals need to empower the staff through the provision of human and material resources to ensure the sustainability of the work once a district-based program ends.

2 EXPLORING

During this phase, teachers in the academy program explored their personal and professional lives during professional development sessions held one weekend each month for nine hours. Their process of continual reflection and self-critique fostered a willingness and openness to re-examine and confront their beliefs, attitudes, and expectations for diverse students, their families, and communities. “The program taught us some new and valuable information related to racism, classism, sexism, and other issues that affect our children” one teacher said. “Many things read about and discussed in the program were things I had already begun researching and confronting on my own, especially through my personal relationships,” another said. “The readings and conversations deepened my understanding of these issues and allowed me to share what I have experienced or learned with other educators in our district.”

Academy teams used their schools’ improvement plans as the starting point from which to identify key challenges to the school’s ability to address inequities and to engage others in examining their practices and tendencies towards deficit thinking. Educators exhibit deficit thinking when their beliefs and perspectives lead them

to overgeneralize about students’ family backgrounds and demonstrate low expectations for students even before they come to school (Garcia & Guerra, 2004, pp. 159-164).

The challenge of low expectations resonated for one school administrator who worked with teacher leaders to examine ways in which belief systems and attitudes influenced the staff’s daily interaction with students and parents. “We were nailing the in-

struction, becoming better educators, but (closing the achievement gap) was really about our attitudes. I was compelled to take a closer look at data and realized that any gap is really about low expectations,” she said. By the end of the program, teacher leaders reported they had “the guts and the nerve to challenge deficit comments from their colleagues,” and that they learned to have “open and honest discussions with peers to challenge deficit thinking that weren’t uncomfortable or unsettling.”

3 EVOLVING

This stage involves building the capacity required to initiate and sustain the transformations in thinking and action required to encourage teacher leadership. Principals play a major role in establishing the conditions required for teacher leadership to thrive (Corallo, 1995), and at the school level, long-standing hierarchical governance structures prevent the support of newer conceptions of leadership that emphasize shared decision making and collaboration among teachers (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Flattening these organizational arrangements requires schools, teachers, and administrators to change the way they think about the concept of power (Buckner & McDowelle, 2000).

Hancock’s (2008) research suggested that principals who embraced and modeled shared, distributive leadership created the conditions for teacher empowerment. Academy teacher leaders explained that this was an essential element for generating support for their equity projects because their principals generated a sense that the equity issue being addressed was a schoolwide concern and not just of interest to the academy team.

4 ENGAGING OTHERS

Because teacher leadership that fosters collegial relationships encourages collective responsibility, student gains, and improved teacher quality (Sabatini, 2002), the academy program emphasized collaborative leadership. Every program component (including the curriculum, field trips, small- and whole-group activities, and the year-end presentations to school, district, and community stakeholders) provided experiences that supported participants to become collaborative leaders, which are described by Rubin (2002) as “strategic, logical, and systemic thinker(s) who understand the steps that must be taken to make things happen and who can engage collaborative partners in productive and efficient planning process” (pp. 55).

Two themes — group process and strategic planning — emerged in the data as collaborative processes teacher leadership teams used to create the conditions for effective equity project implementation. Working in teams to design and execute their equity-based school improvement projects allowed participants to make the most of the individual skill sets of each team member and pay attention to the functional dynamics of the group. Additionally, participants used three strategies to influence their colleagues’ practice, including recognizing

Rochester City School District

Rochester, N.Y.

Number of schools: **64**

Enrollment: **32,000** students

Staff: **6,500**

Racial/ethnic mix:

White:	11%
Black:	64%
Hispanic:	22%
Asian/Pacific Islander:	3%
Native American:	0%
Other:	0%

Limited English proficient: **10%**

Languages spoken: **72**

Free/reduced lunch: **84%**

Special education: **18%**

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individual strengths, compromise, and conversations. Together these strategies helped to garner and maintain the commitment of individual team members and other classroom teachers in their buildings. Collectively they understood that achieving their goals depended on positive collaborative relationships.

5 ENERGIZING OTHERS

As revealed in the data, academy participants entered the program with a high degree of teacher efficacy. They were confident in their ability to influence student achievement and believed that it was their personal responsibility to do so. The power of this positive thinking was contagious and helped energize team members and colleagues. The majority of the participants had been teaching for more than 10 years and were ripe for the opportunity to become part of a districtwide initiative where they could make real change — not as a lone ranger, but as part of a dynamic and dedicated team of educators.

Interview and focus group data suggests that academy teams noticed there were professional practices that helped students to see themselves as learners. Because they were teacher-initiated, student-centered, and improvement-focused, equity-based school improvement projects encouraged teachers across their buildings to use these practices. This instructional focus helped energize their work and maintain momentum over the course of their two-year commitment. The teams promoted specific practices including: maintaining high expectations for all students, making connections between school and home cultures, making subject matter relevant to the lives and cultural backgrounds of their students, and engaging families in their children's education.

ACHIEVING EMPOWERMENT

It is clear that “teachers cannot be given power (empowered) without accepting it” (Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 1999, p. 26), but it is also clear that administrators must know how to create conditions that foster empowerment and that school districts must make long-term commitments to supporting schools. When schools consulted, involved, and engaged teachers in making key decisions, they enjoyed greater student and staff morale, and educators were more willing to adapt and change their practice to improve student learning. Over the course of the academy program and subsequent district teacher leadership initiatives, teams used equity projects as a vehicle to demonstrate that instruction could be changed, adapted, and reinforced to improve schools' ability to meet the instructional needs of all students.

Teacher leaders and their colleagues need ongoing support to make their work meaningful (Hart, 1994), and district-higher education collaborations focused on teacher leadership development are one way to provide a context within which teachers leaders can emerge and flourish. The findings from this study support the claim that the judicious planning, implementation, and evaluation of a teacher leadership program focused

on the real work of urban schooling can cultivate collaborative learning experiences to connect people, purpose, and practice toward a common goal of equity for all students.

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- Effects of the NISL's Executive Development Program on School Performance in Pennsylvania: 2006-2010 Cohort Results,
Old Dominion University, Johns Hopkins University





Photo by JILL HARRISON BERG

Teacher leaders Marcia Riddick (left) and Evelyn Prophete discuss how to organize the skills covered in the shared leadership course.

BOSTON SHIFTS LEARNING *into* HIGH GEAR

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM ACCELERATES
STUDENT LEARNING BY BUILDING
TEACHER CAPACITY

By Jill Harrison Berg, Lesley Ryan Miller, and Phomdaen Souvanna

Throughout the past two decades, Boston Public Schools has seen strong, steady improvement, recently demonstrated through student gains on NAEP's Trial Urban District Assessment in math and recognized through the award of the 2006 Broad Prize for Urban Education. Boston Superintendent Carol Johnson notes, "Today, Boston Public Schools offers the best education possible for some of our students. We have the capacity to offer the best education possible for all of our

students."

Teacher leaders have played an important role in Boston's improvement. As team leaders, mentors, and members of instructional leadership teams, for example, teacher leaders have helped to strengthen teaching by leading collaborative teams, supporting colleagues' professional learning, and facilitating data-driven decision making. The Boston Teacher Leadership Certificate capitalizes on the expertise of Boston's experienced teacher leaders to bolster the system's capacity to accelerate learning for all students.

Since effective teaching is essential for students' aca-

demographic growth, it only makes sense that effective teachers would be important assets to improving student learning in a school or district. Yet effective teachers are not necessarily effective in formal teacher leadership roles. Teacher leadership roles, which teachers and administrators design to contribute in a deliberate way to improved teaching and learning, require a range of knowledge and skills beyond those required for effective teaching.

The Boston Teacher Leadership Certificate program is unique from other programs that support teachers to build teacher leadership skills in three important ways. First, the courses it comprises are designed to strengthen the specific knowledge and skills needed in Boston, ensuring teachers' capacity-building efforts connect directly with district needs. Second, the certificate benefits from a partnership among the district, the local education fund, and local institutions of higher education. This collaboration enables teachers to earn graduate credits for participating in high-quality, role-relevant professional learning. Lastly, experienced teacher leaders are the designers and instructors for the certificate's core courses to ensure that the certificate meets the demands of participants' work.

COHERENT CONNECTION TO DISTRICT REFORM PLAN

Teacher leadership programs often leave teachers feeling "all dressed up with no place to go." Participants return to their districts feeling empowered with their new knowledge and skills, but too often no one in the district has a real understanding of what skills these teachers have that would be useful to the district.

Just as our own Boston Teacher Residency recruits and

prepares teachers for success in Boston's classrooms, we have designed the Boston Teacher Leadership Certificate to prepare teacher leaders to succeed in adding real value to Boston's reform plans. Boston's Acceleration Agenda — our five-year strategic plan for achieving proficiency, closing achievement gaps, and preparing all students for college completion and career success — includes several initiatives that are dependent on teacher leadership roles (see chart below). In designing our certificate, we analyzed five of the most critical roles to identify specific knowledge and skills required to carry out each role well. From this exercise, we realized that many of the skills were important across roles while a few were role-specific. Therefore, we designed the certificate to include a series of four courses that strengthen core teacher leadership skills that all teacher leaders need, plus a series of role-specific courses from which teachers choose, based on their role.

To ensure that the certificate would support teachers to be resources for Boston now and in the future, we reviewed teacher leadership research as well as national and local standards for teacher leadership and instructional leadership (see box on p. 34). An analysis of the standards, indicators, and key ideas in these documents helped us define four core skill areas and accompanying competencies most roles require. That is, no matter what teacher leadership role an educator holds, it is important that the teacher understand and be proficient in using data, supporting instruction, strengthening shared leadership, and enhancing and using profes-

"This work is bringing my voice back. It's definitely putting the fire back into me and what I do."

— *Teacher during a work session to develop courses*

District reform initiatives AND THE TEACHER LEADERSHIP ROLES THEY SERVE

Elements of the Acceleration Agenda	Teacher leadership roles
Multitiered interventions	Service team facilitators: Support cross-functional teams to increase student learning by designing a multitiered system of academic and behavioral supports.
English language learning (ELL) program expansion	Language assessment team teacher leaders: Support high-quality implementation of ELL policy and instructional practices.
Using data to transform instruction and School-based data teams	Data-based inquiry teacher leaders: Support colleagues to use information about student learning to make strong instructional decisions that lead to progress.
Retention of the strongest teachers	Induction mentors and coaches: Support novice teachers to become effective teachers with a commitment to the profession.
Recruitment and hiring of a qualified and diverse teaching force	Boston Teacher Residency mentors: Host residents in their classrooms for a year-long, full-time apprenticeship so that they can be hired with a realistic preview of the work ahead.

sional expertise (see box on p. 35). Importantly, these skill areas that comprise the four core courses of the certificate are positively associated with student achievement, from creating a data culture (Gallimore, Ermeling, Saunders, & Goldenberg, 2009; Talbert, Scharff, & Lin, 2008), to focusing on instructional quality (Cohen & Ball, 1999; Elmore, 2004), to cultivating shared leadership (Lambert, 2003; Murphy, 2005), to knowing how to access and use the knowledge base of professional knowledge (Hess, 2008). While some skills are more important for some roles than others, the courses enable the district to readily identify who has which skills. Further, teachers who successfully complete all four courses will have demonstrated to the district that they have acquired a wide range of the skills needed for current and future leadership roles.

Lastly, we collaborated with the relevant Boston Public Schools departments to review, streamline, and improve existing learning opportunities, and to design a new role-specific course for each role that did not previously include support. Some district leaders have noted that they are able to make better use of the limited hours they have for role-specific learning when they are able to rely on the core courses for developing teachers' basic leadership skills. At the same time, the conversations with Boston Public Schools departments about role-specific learning have led in some cases to more clearly defined job descriptions.

Formal roles that aim to support effective teaching should be held by those who are effective teachers. The Boston Teacher

Leadership Certificate focuses on all the skills that lie outside of effective teaching. It does not identify effective teachers, and it does not entitle anyone to a role. In fact, since there are so many teachers in Boston who already hold leadership roles and who haven't been through a formal learning program, the certificate is initially being offered to teachers who already hold formal roles in the district. The onus is on these departments to select and retain only effective teachers for these roles. However, an important part of the district's reform plan is to overhaul the teacher evaluation tool, which defines effective teaching in Boston. As the district builds its knowledge about how to identify effective teaching, we hope this information, together with the certificate, can aid Boston Public Schools departments to strengthen the strategies they use to select teachers for the district's critical reform roles.

A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP

The Boston Teacher Leadership Certificate is part of a larger project funded by a federal Teacher Quality Partnership Grant and designed to build a continuum of teacher preparation and professional development with a focus on high student achievement. In addition to the Boston Public Schools and Boston Teacher Residency Program, the certificate is supported by the Boston Plan for Excellence, which is Boston's public education fund, and two institutions of higher education, University of Massachusetts Boston and Wheelock College.

Each partner brings an important perspective to the table. The contribution of Boston Public Schools ensures that the work is connected to district priorities and is coordinated with the departments that oversee teacher leadership roles. Boston Teacher Residency brings the experience of designing a program that addresses Boston's needs as well as firsthand knowledge about teachers' career aspirations. They want opportunities for job differentiation, career advancement, and increased compensation without leaving the classroom, such as the roles supported by this certificate. Boston Plan for Excellence offers grounded, school-based experience from more than two decades of refining school improvement models and tools that help create conditions of excellence for every student in Boston Public Schools.

University of Massachusetts Boston, Wheelock College, and Cambridge College have supported the certificate in a variety of ways. In addition to contributing to the overall quality of the coursework through faculty participation on review panels, a core team of higher education partners has met regularly to advise on the certificate design. They have enabled the program to offer a range of options for earning graduate credit, including the opportunity for teachers to build on the credits they earn from the certificate and work toward a full Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study. The opportunity to earn credits that can lead to increased compensation is an additional motivating factor for some teachers and presents a benefit to the district,

National and local framework on leadership

- **Teacher Leadership Skills Framework**, Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, www.cstp-wa.org/sites/default/files/teacher_leadership_skills_framework.pdf.
- **Model Teacher Leaders Standards** (draft), Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium, <http://tlstandards.pbworks.com>.
- **Five State Teacher Leadership Consortium**, Council of Chief State School Officers, http://events.ccsso.org/projects/Five_State_Teacher_Leadership_Consortium.
- **New Teacher Center Mentor Academy**, University of California, Santa Cruz, <http://newteachercenter.org/ti/menu.php?p=ma>.
- **Boston Public Schools Dimensions of Effective Teaching**, Boston Plan for Excellence, www.bpe.org/taxonomy/term/229.
- **Professional Standards for Administrators**, Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=10.
- **National Board Certification for Educational Leaders**, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, www.nbpts.org/products_and_services/national_board_certifica.
- **National Educational Technology Standards for Administrators**, International Society for Technology in Education, www.iste.org/standards/nets-for-administrators.aspx.

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES FRAMEWORK

Core skill	Core competencies
Use data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and analyze data. • Use data to inform decisions. • Create a culture of high expectations with data. • Communicate with data.
Support instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand educators as adult learners. • Observe and analyze instruction. • Provide growth-oriented feedback on instruction. • Plan and implement effective professional learning. • Evaluate and adapt instructional resources.
Shared leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a collaborative learning-focused team. • Understand self and team as part of a system. • Manage a team for effectiveness.
Professional expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on professional practice; grow as a professional. • Address organizational and cultural barriers to having and sharing expertise. • Access, interpret, and use the professional knowledge base; stay current in the field. • Contribute one's expertise to improve research, policy, and practice within the school or district.

which compensates teachers for earning graduate credits, as it ensures that the graduate credits teachers receive are aligned with district priorities.

Other local universities, programs, and individuals support this work as well. These professors, district leaders, retired teachers and principals, and other colleagues served on our review panel, providing critical feedback and suggestions for relevant literature. By engaging such a wide-ranging group of invested individuals, the certificate benefited from a larger pool of good thinking, and the teachers who developed the courses were bolstered by a supportive professional community. One university partner even admitted, "I'm tempted to borrow things," which helped us to know that this experience offered a rich learning experience for all involved and strengthened our partnership.

BY TEACHERS, FOR TEACHERS

A third significant design element of the Boston Teacher Leadership Certificate is that it is developed by teachers, for teachers. Teachers traditionally have very little input into the factors that are meant to support their work: Curricula and assessments are largely mandated, most professional development is determined by the school or district, and district-level decisions are made by a school committee that includes no class-

room teachers. In our model, experienced teacher leaders design courses for their peers, deliver the courses, and comprise the advisory committee that serves as a sounding board as the work grows and evolves. Teacher involvement in every phase of development ensures that the certificate continues to meet teachers' and the district's real needs.

Roughly three dozen teacher leaders selected from across Boston's 135 schools were brought together to design the four core courses of Boston's Teacher Leadership Certificate. These practicing classroom teachers brought perspective that enabled them to keep the course focused on what their colleagues most need to know and be able to do for Boston's children. As one teacher described the work, "This work will develop professional development that will be geared toward teachers and address their real needs." Collaborating to develop the courses was also a valuable professional learning opportunity, as the teachers learned from colleagues about roles, practices, and strategies from other departments and grade levels and reflected together on the similarities and differences. For the teacher leaders who had not taught graduate-level courses before, the experience with course design helped these teachers to feel well-prepared to teach the courses to others.

There are benefits to teachers leading the courses. Teachers can make a bigger difference than traditional external professional development providers in helping colleagues improve their practice because they have a relationship and regular contact with teachers and the roles they aim to support. One course developer noted, "A lot of professional development is condescending to teachers. We're treated with disrespect. But, in this, we're going to be mindful and honor colleagues' expertise." Whenever possible, the certificate's core courses are taught by teachers, as the certificate is meant to provide an opportunity for advancement and professional renewal that does not lead teachers out of the classroom. During a work session to develop the courses, one teacher reflected, "This work is bringing my voice back. It's definitely putting the fire back into me and what I do."

Teachers also have an ongoing leadership role in the Boston Teacher Leadership Certificate. Ten teachers and two principals serve on the advisory committee, serving as a sounding board and ensuring the certificate's ongoing quality.

ACCELERATING STUDENT LEARNING

Boston is not alone in its urgency to accelerate learning for all children. Districts around the nation share the challenges of addressing a proficiency gap and doing a better job of preparing all children to succeed. This sense of urgency has focused

our attention on strengthening teaching and leadership. But we also have a record of success that we can build on to increase instructional leadership capacity in schools: the successful efforts of teacher leaders. The Boston Teacher Leadership Certificate capitalizes on the expertise of our experienced teacher leaders to ensure Boston's schools will have the capacity to boost district improvement. As teacher leaders strengthen their knowledge and skills for teacher leadership, they will bring new capacity to the leadership roles they hold, and contribute more effectively to accelerating learning for every student.

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TAs JOIN *the* TEAM

UK EXPANDS ROLE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN THE CLASSROOM

By Jill Morgan and Betty Y. Ashbaker

Teachers in the United Kingdom are often supported in the classroom by teaching assistants (TAs) — paraprofessionals whose roles have changed significantly in the last several years. The 2003 National Agreement: Raising Standards and Tackling Workload, known as the workforce remodeling initiative (DES, 2003), was designed to raise standards in schools in Eng-

land and Wales by reducing unnecessary paperwork and bureaucracy for teachers. The National Agreement was intended to allow teachers to devote more time to teaching and learning, and at the same time open up more roles for teaching assistants to support teachers.

These changes have had an impact on classroom teachers and the leadership roles they play. UK government figures show that the number of support staff working in schools in England more than doubled between 1995 and 2005 (61,300 to 148,500) whereas the number of teachers increased by only 10% (399,000 to 440,000). Schools in

Wales currently employ at least 8,000 teaching assistants. A 2007 report by Estyn (the government inspectorate for schools in Wales) stated: “The significant increase in support staff numbers means that senior teachers find it time-consuming to organize and deploy these staff.” This was — and remains — a very real concern, but the report offered the reassurance: “There is evidence that TAs who are suitably qualified and supervised will make a difference to pupil achievement.” (In the UK, teaching assistant denotes school-based paraprofessionals and does not include college-level support.)

In the 1980s and 1990s in England and Wales, teaching assistants were considered nonteaching staff because their roles were essentially ancillary. Very few teaching assistants now have completely nonteaching roles, and many of them not only have teaching responsibilities, but some also have responsibility for supervising other teaching assistants. There are now many similarities between the work of teachers and teaching assistants, but there are also many differences — legal status being the most obvious, with the teacher having overall leadership responsibility for the classroom.

Historically, many teacher roles have had relatively little to do with their core area of expertise: teaching and learning. What the National Agreement achieved was to:

- Allocate every teacher one half-day per week of preparation, planning, and assessment time, in recognition of the essential nature of these aspects of teaching and learning;
- Allow teachers to delegate certain tasks to support staff, acknowledging that many classroom activities are important but not vital to student learning and can be performed equally well by support staff. The National Agreement specified 25 nonteaching tasks that could be delegated to teaching assistants. (See list at right.)

The law then allows for considerable delegation beyond the clerical/housekeeping tasks in terms of the new roles for teaching assistants introduced by the National Agreement. This has had a significant impact on how teaching assistants are seen within the education system, and on the ways in which they are deployed. In considering the topic of teacher leadership, it also highlights the role of the teacher as a leader of the classroom team.

In 2009, the UK government published the findings from a national survey of the characteristics, use, and impact of support staff in schools in England and Wales (Blatchford et al., 2009). Some key points related to the role of the teacher in leading teaching assistants:

- Only 6% of respondents reported that time was allocated for teachers and teaching assistants to meet; 33% of respondents reported that support staff were involved in some way in planning with teachers;

TASKS TEACHERS CAN DELEGATE TO TEACHING ASSISTANTS

- Collect money.
- Notify appropriate personnel about student absences.
- Photocopy.
- Type.
- Produce standard letters.
- Produce class lists.
- Keep and file records.
- Create classroom displays.
- Analyze attendance figures.
- Process exam results.
- Collate student reports.
- Supervise students on work experience.
- Administer examinations.
- Fill in for absent teachers.
- Troubleshoot instructional technology.
- Commission new instructional technology equipment.
- Order supplies and equipment.
- Take stock.
- Catalog, prepare, issue, or maintain equipment and materials.
- Take meeting minutes.
- Coordinate and submit bids.
- Seek and give personnel advice.
- Manage student data.
- Input student data.
- Proctor exams.

- Teachers used feedback given to them by support staff in only 24% of the schools; and
- Support staff expertise was gained through training in only 21% of responses; in 67% of responses, support staff expertise was experiential or provided via communication with the teacher.

Not surprisingly, Blatchford et al. (2009) commented that “a substantial component of all teacher training courses should involve ways of working successfully with support staff. This should recognize the reality that TAs are working in a pedagogical way with students, and consider in a systematic way the management of TA deployment in relation to managerial, pedagogical, and curriculum concerns” (p. 133).

Teachers may not feel that they are natural leaders,

or even feel that it is necessary to take the lead in the classroom or instructional team in a particularly assertive way. Conversely, there are many teachers who do take deliberate steps to build their classroom team and take them forward. We suggest the following questions to carefully consider this aspect of teacher leadership:

- Do I see myself as in charge and the teaching assistant as my subordinate, or are we partners in the teaching process?
- How much authority do I think my teaching assistant should have — complete freedom to use his or her own judgment, or does the TA always have to refer decisions to me?
- Do I see my teaching assistant as a person with a wide range of skills and assets, or as someone who can

only be assigned a limited range of tasks because of a lack of qualifications or knowledge (Morgan & Ashbaker, 2011)?

The answers to these questions will have a direct influence on the way a teacher works with a teaching assistant.

There is some controversy over terminology in the UK about the teacher’s role as a classroom leader. The term **supervision** tends to convey an overly close management style. The word **management** itself suggests line management or purely organizational responsibilities. Teachers are accustomed to managing behavior and learning, but typically children’s behavior or learning, not that of adults. A more collegial term, suggesting an advisory role, is **mentor**. Whatever the term of preference, the nuances of all these terms are involved in leading a classroom team, which includes a responsibility to guide, monitor, and support the work of another person, generally one who is less qualified or experienced.

The 2003 National Agreement not only specified work regulations for support staff but required “a proper system of direction and supervision for them.” The National Agreement paid a great deal of attention to ways in which teachers delegate responsibilities to teaching assistants, particularly as cover supervisors for their preparation, planning, and assessment time. (Cover supervisors are roughly equivalent to substitute teachers in the U.S.) Much less attention has been given to the requirement for a “proper system of direction and supervision” and what that really means.

Much of the literature relating to supervision of teaching assistants comes from the United States. Researchers in the U.S. have challenged teams to explore alternative supports that will increase teacher engagement time with students rather than delegating important instructional duties to teaching assistants

7 phases of classroom supervision for teaching assistants

1. Establish the supervisor and supervisee relationship.
2. Plan lessons and units with the teaching assistant.
3. Plan classroom observation strategy with the teaching assistant.
4. Analyze the teaching and learning process.
5. Plan a conference strategy.
6. Have a conference.
7. Resume planning.

Source: Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993.

(Giangreco, 2003). Sergiovanni and Starratt (1993) have stated that supervision, if used correctly, can create powerful results in improving instruction. They define supervision as “face-to-face contact with teachers with the intent of improving instruction and increasing professional growth” (p. 203). One of the most important principles they identified was the mental and physical closeness between the supervisor and supervisee; close and frequent proximity was necessary to using a clinical supervision model. Learn more about the phases of classroom supervision at left.

Two decades earlier, Richard Weller (1971) referred to cycles of planning, observation, and “intensive intellectual analysis of teaching performance in the interest of rational modification” (p. 4).

This referred to supervising teachers or student teachers rather than teaching assistants, but from about the mid-1980s, a number of scholars working with teaching assistants began to develop lists of supervisory activities that closely followed these models. Steckelberg and Vasa (1998) also identified specific issues that supervising teachers face, including:

1. Making daily assignments and scheduling activities.
2. Designing instruction for another adult to carry out.
3. Monitoring student progress and making instructional decisions when not present.
4. Providing corrective feedback to paraprofessionals (teaching assistants).
5. Developing and documenting on-the-job training.
6. Evaluating paraprofessional / teaching assistant performance.
7. Dealing with problems and differences.

The common theme from these educators is that supervision is intended to improve instruction. In addition, Weller’s cycle and Sergiovanni and Starratt’s recommendations both sound a lot like action research as they recommend repetition of the steps and activities, suggesting more than just casual lip-service. It is *intensive* analysis of teaching performance in order to improve the quality or effectiveness of that teaching. Here again, terminology can be problematic as performance suggests performance evaluation or appraisal, but Weller’s phrase — “in the interest of rational modification” — offers comfort to teachers. They are not expected to make enormous changes overnight, or perform unreasonable feats of professional development. The important thing is to seek, as all good teachers do with their students, to make the small, incremental changes that constitute learning, and that eventually produce an expert — a

child who is a confident reader, a teacher who is perfecting his or her craft, but also a teaching assistant who understands the teaching process and can therefore be an able assistant to the teacher and to the children they are jointly responsible for.

Based on research in the UK, Vincett, Cremin, and Thomas (2005) refer to tensions in the classroom that prevent or at very least reduce the likelihood of effective collaborations between teachers and teaching assistants. These include:

- Teaching assistants' lack of training/knowledge of effective classroom practices;
- Teaching assistants' concern about their own status;
- The teacher's lack of knowledge of how best to work with teaching assistants; and
- Lack of time for teachers and teaching assistants to meet for joint planning.

To overcome these tensions, Vincett et al. offer three models for organizing classroom teams:

1. Room management

In this model, one of the adults is designated as the learning manager (working intensively with a small group or an individual) and the other the activity manager (providing a less intense level of supervision to the remainder of the class). This model helps counteract the tension of the teaching assistant's lack of knowledge about classroom practice as the teacher discusses strengths and weaknesses of teaching sessions, and provides on-the-job guidance and insights into effective practice.

2. Zoning

In this arrangement, the classroom is divided into zones or learning areas, and each adult has responsibility for particular zones. These may be based on existing arrangements of work tables, or could be smaller units separated physically by bookcases or other natural barriers. Zoning responsibilities can be changed at any time, as long as each adult recognizes the physical boundaries of his or her new responsibility. The teaching assistant's concern about status is counteracted by the teacher giving credence to the teaching assistant's views and showing the teaching assistant's opinion is valued.

3. Reflective teamwork

Whereas the other two models are based on the need for role clarity, with each adult working independently, reflective teamwork is designed to enhance planning, communication, and review. Here, teachers and teaching assistants sit together daily for about 15 minutes to review previous teaching sessions. First the teaching assistant and then the teacher identify two things that went well during a particular teaching session, as well as two things that could be improved. They use these reflections to plan for upcoming teaching sessions. Reflective teamwork overcomes the tensions listed above by counteracting the perceived lack of time for teachers and teaching assistants

to meet and plan. It also builds the teacher's knowledge of how best to work with teaching assistants.

Teachers are the leaders of the classroom team, with responsibility to ensure the team follows legal and ethical guidelines. UK government documentation states that teaching assistants should be systematically supervised. While it may be the responsibility of a school's senior management team to ensure that proper systems are in place, the reality is that the teacher works with the teaching assistant on a day-to-day basis, and therefore needs to take opportunities to provide leadership to the teaching assistant. As schools heavily rely on teaching assistants now more than ever, they can encourage teachers and teaching assistants to plan and conference to enhance instruction. But the good news is that teachers can take the lead to ensure that the classroom team functions most effectively to support children's learning.

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A LADDER *to* LEADERSHIP

OHIO STEPS UP TO STRENGTHEN TEACHERS' COLLABORATION AND COACHING SKILLS

By JoAnn Hohenbrink, Marlissa Stauffer, Ted Zigler, and Angela Uhlenhake

The move toward teacher leadership is one answer to the dilemma of school leadership. The task of school leadership has become too complex and demanding for one person. Nurturing teacher leaders helps districts strengthen school leadership, aids in teacher retention, and sustains school reform. This need for more teacher involvement in leadership led to the creation of a five-state consortium (Kentucky, Kansas, Alabama, Delaware, and Ohio) facilitated by Joseph Murphy of Vanderbilt University to explore, define, and develop courses to prepare teacher leaders. With Ohio's new teacher career lattice that includes teacher leader as one of the top tiers, teacher leadership is in the spotlight at district and state levels.

RATIONALE FOR A TEACHER LEADER ENDORSEMENT

A four-year teacher residency program, available to candidates who graduate from an accredited teacher preparation program, provides Ohio's new teachers with the coaching, mentoring, and guidance that are critical for long and successful careers as educators. Teacher leaders play a vital role in supporting beginning teachers during their residency program. The new teacher leader endorsement will facilitate support of the teacher residency program by preparing educators to serve as teacher leaders. These leaders will gain skills in working with adult learners, facilitat-



ing and leading change, managing conflict, and coaching and mentoring teachers at all stages in their careers. Additionally, teacher leaders will assist principals in developing and supporting a shared vision and clear goals for schools and provide staff development, mentoring, and coaching to teachers.

With the support of the Ohio Department of Education and The Wallace Foundation, educators at Ohio Dominican University in Columbus, Ohio, instituted a pilot program for a teacher leader endorsement. The five-state consortium and the Ohio writing teams designed a three-course program of nine semester hours. While some states in the consortium are considering a new license in teacher leadership, others are exploring a teacher leader endorsement that complements an existing teacher license.

In developing the pilot, our research focused on three specific areas not typically covered in teacher preparation programs: knowledge and understanding of leadership; understanding collaboration and working in groups for the purpose of teacher and/or school development; and understanding coaching and mentoring for improved results (see brief course descriptions in box at right).

LEARNING FROM STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Each participant wrote a final reflection about the three courses, noting what had an impact, what worked, and what needed to be changed. The course participants were not new to teacher leadership. About 75% of the cohort were in a Teacher Advancement Program in a large urban school system (Columbus City Schools) and had previous training in coaching and mentoring.

Many participants wrote about the importance of the first course on leadership. They found that the readings, discussions, and self-assessments to understand their own leadership styles had a great impact on their teaching and leadership. Researchers were surprised that this information was new to teachers in leadership positions in their schools and the district. We understand now that teacher preparation programs and districts aren't teaching teachers how to work in leadership roles, while they spend lots of time and money training them how to coach and mentor (Uhlenhake, 2010).

The self-inventories had a particular value to the learners. The inventories included the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument, the DISC self-inventory of leadership styles, and a rough form of leadership identification similar to the Myers-Briggs personality inventory. In discussions, students explored what they were learning about themselves and how to build on what they learned through these assessments.

Almost every participant (20 of 23) wrote about the

COURSES FOR THE TEACHER LEADER ENDORSEMENT

Course 1

Developing a Deeper Understanding of Leadership

Teacher leaders will examine their own leadership styles and beliefs while learning more about leadership in general and school leadership specifically. A goal is to increase teachers' leadership skills and knowledge so as individuals and teams, they help develop solutions to real-world issues in schools.

Course 2

Collaboration: Leading and Facilitating Teacher Development

Teachers leaders will analyze and practice how to effectively collaborate. This course covers facilitation skills, consensus building, team-building strategies, and problem-solving skills that work in school settings. As their culminating projects, participants lead a school team or group to experience and understand the development of that group with the support of the instructional team.

Course 3

Coaching and Mentoring for Improved Results

This course focuses on developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for teacher leaders to provide high levels of effective coaching and mentoring with the intention of improving classroom practices and learning for all students. For their final projects, participants mentor and coach teachers in their districts in a safe practice environment within guidelines of the district.

importance of small- and large-group discussions. Working in collaboration was invaluable to the students to understand groups and group dynamics as well as build relationships. Thus, the cohort model was key to their learning, mutual support, and growth. They learned much from each other and from students in another district.

Considering the course structure, students initially wondered why each class started with a warm-up activity. They soon understood this helped build relationships, allowed everyone to speak right away, and released some of the worries of the school day to prepare for getting to work. It became a favorite group activity.

Every student but one wrote about his or her personal growth, and even the exception wrote of the great confirmation she felt as a result of the coursework. The reflections indicated that the courses help students feel confident about their thoughts and methods. They understood they were already doing a lot right in working with their fellow teachers. Others wrote of overcoming fears — fears of speaking to groups or leading peers in meetings — or of overcoming isolation and resistance that many felt once they were identified in their buildings as teacher leaders.

They also wrote about the value of learning how to listen, lead groups, work in teams, and share leadership. They noted that adult learning theory was another important new area of knowledge for them. They understood that working with adults requires a different set of pedagogical skills than what they use with K-12 students.

Comments ranged from, “Wow, have I been waiting for this!” to “I have grown in unfathomable ways; this reflection can’t scratch the surface,” and “I have never gotten more out of class.” Another said: “The biggest change I’ve experienced as a result of going through the teacher leader endorsement process is my level of confidence in my job.” It was obvious the members of the cohort learned from each other: “Thank you for allowing me to take part in this collegial meeting of the minds every week.”

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

The authors believe that the leadership teachers are exploring in these courses is essential for their success, and this type of leadership isn’t identical to principal leadership. The isolation teacher leaders feel when they begin to lead their colleagues is profound. Because they lack positional power, it is important for teacher leaders to lead by example, by helping others, through the use of collaboration, and by using every tool available to them. We posit that this may be a pure form of leadership using a kind of “expert power.” Such teachers must lead from ideas and by example, by being the best at something, and through simply helping their colleagues succeed.

Through this pilot project, we heard about so many roles that teacher leaders need to play. We believe that it is essential that we not try to codify all teacher leader roles into formal, paid positions or even informal positions. Flexibility in roles and relationships will maximize teacher leaders in every building. Ohio has 614 school districts, and the concept of teacher leadership must apply to all and flex to meet the needs of all districts.

LESSONS LEARNED

As instructors and participants in this research project, we found several elements of the pilot essential to personal growth and development of students in leadership, including cohort-based programs, inventories for self-understanding, field-based projects, a team of instructors to model skills, learners working in groups, simulations, and an emphasis on reflection. Instructors should span teacher education and educational leadership (which is usually about just preparing principals) and include someone from the school district for a real-world perspective on the relevance and practicality of the curriculum.

Teacher leader candidates in the courses were clear about the need for support from administrators. No amount of professional learning can overcome a principal who does not want to share leadership. The district office must create an environment conducive to teacher leaders and shared leadership and encourage principals to work alongside teacher leaders to create and sustain change.

We realized the importance of giving teachers the opportunity to practice the leadership skills they were learning. Mintzberg (2004) writes that the optimal situation for learning management skills is to take coursework while in a leadership position. In the teacher leadership courses, the culminating project was actual work in the field with teachers. While such practice can be scary, in this context it came with the support of the instructors and cohort members.

Andrews and Crowther (2006) talk of parallel leadership, which is a “particular relatedness between teacher leaders and administrator leaders” that “leads to strengthened alignment between the school’s vision and the school’s teaching and learning practices” (p. 536). Strong organizations have good leaders, with the necessary skills and tools, at all levels (Bennis, 1994). These sources strongly suggest new teacher leaders take their place alongside good principals.

The era of a single leader in a school or district is over — one person cannot do the enormous task required. For the sake of sustainability of school reform movements in schools, we must develop teacher leaders to stand beside principals, working hand-in-hand to make positive change in schools. When any one person in positional authority leaves, the network of teacher leaders can maintain the positive change achieved in schools.

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For the sake of sustainability of school reform movements in schools, we must develop teacher leaders to stand beside principals, working hand-in-hand to make positive change in schools.

WHEN NICE WON'T SUFFICE

Honest discourse is key to shifting school culture

By Elisa MacDonald

How is it that a teacher leader who has followed all the recommended steps to ensure collaboration with his or her team — establishing a SMART goal, studying instructional strategies, administering assessments, looking at assessments with a protocol — still encounters superficial levels of discourse that do not move beyond the “culture of nice”?

Consider the following common snapshot of a team:

Pat Carter leads a team of teachers that has set a goal to improve student writing. The team meets twice a month, has discussed articles about literacy and implemented literacy strategies, and is for the first time looking at student work. Carter uses a protocol to guide the discussion and asks her team, “What do you notice?”

One teacher responds, “I notice that the presenting teacher is a really good teacher.” Others agree and share more compliments, asking if they can borrow the teacher’s lesson.



Although Carter has led the team through the appropriate steps for successful collaboration, her team’s discussion is censored by the culture of nice — the underlying culture that inhibits the team from reaching a level of rigorous collaborative discourse where teachers are challenging each other’s and their own thinking, beliefs, assumptions, and practice.

The act of analyzing student work, like discussing other sensitive topics such as race or student equity, requires teacher leaders to foster a vulnerability-based trust (Lencioni, 2002). Teachers must be willing to expose their struggles and failures with their colleagues, and colleagues must be willing to tell the truth, or teams will go through the motions of collaborative inquiry but never see results.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER LEADER

Through skillful facilitation, the teacher leader can unearth cultural issues that lie beneath the surface and stand in the way of change. If a team collaborates without addressing and working to shift the culture of nice, the teacher leader puts the team at risk of gaining no insight into its own practice, obtaining no results (or unsustain-

able results) for students, going through the motions of collaboration, and ultimately dismissing the process as a waste of time.

While no one has the power to make a person or group change thinking and behaviors, teacher leaders who recognize the signs of a dysfunctional culture, respond proactively and in the moment, and follow up after a team collaborates can initiate moments that move the team beyond the culture of nice.

1. RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS.

A team affected by the culture of nice can look high-functioning on the surface, but signs of an unhealthy culture may exist:

- **Teachers rarely question each other’s and their own practice, assumptions, and beliefs.** Instead they may only compliment each other, without investigating areas where the student needs to improve and how the teacher can change instruction to meet those needs. If teachers always leave a team meeting only feeling confirmed in what they have been doing, the team has probably never reached rigorous collaborative discourse.
- **Teachers only share successful student work to avoid judgment from peers.** While a teacher leader can still facilitate a rigorous collaborative discourse around successful work, educators stuck in the culture of nice rarely question what makes the work successful and how to elicit similar successes from students not meeting expectations.
- **Teachers who share their unsuccessful student work and those examining it make excuses as to why the student underperformed.** In a culture of nice, teachers are more likely to find blame with the assessment or the student rather than analyzing the instruction that may have affected the student’s work. This approach can come from good intentions, like not wanting to hurt a teacher’s feelings, but ultimately it doesn’t change instruction and can be harmful to students.
- **Teachers recommend strategies for the presenting teacher to apply, but don’t critically reflect and apply them to their own instruction.** Teams who are stuck in the culture of nice may not explore the broader implications of what they are discussing.

Creating norms that live on a piece of paper in a drawer does not move a team into rigorous collaborative discourse. The teacher leader must ask the team to use the norms at each meeting and evaluate its ability as a team to live by them regularly.

Some teachers are comfortable analyzing a colleague’s dilemma and offering recommendations, but the rigorous collaborative discourse stops before they recognize the changes that they may also need to make in their own classrooms. Teachers might be so narrowly focused on the presenting teacher’s student work that they fail to recognize their own students have a similar problem. Others who notice the problem might resist the given strategies because they don’t think they will work with their students, or they don’t know how to implement them.

2. RESPOND PROACTIVELY.

- **Create a safe environment with living norms.** Before a teacher leader starts a collaborative discussion about teaching and learning, he or she can facilitate a discussion about the existing culture that teachers perceive in the school and team. Together, the teacher leader and the team can set up group agreements (often referred to as norms) to call awareness to moments when the discussion dwells in nice and design ways the team can go deeper. Examples of norms might be:
 - Invite others to question your assumptions, beliefs, and actions;
 - Go beyond the surface;
 - Respectfully challenge viewpoints;
 - Agree to disagree without being disagreeable; or
 - Zoom in to the real issue.
- Creating norms that live on a piece of paper in a drawer does not move a team into rigorous collaborative discourse. The teacher leader must ask the team to use the norms at each meeting and evaluate its ability as a team to live by them regularly.
- **Share responsibility.** Teacher leaders can collaboratively generate an assessment or lesson at a meeting before the discussion of the results so that all team members take responsibility for the outcome. Teachers are more apt to speak honestly about a lesson or assessment they had a hand in creating, rather than if one of their colleagues did it alone. In addition, sharing in the decision making lessens the natural instinct for an individual teacher to defend his or her choices when he or she gets poor results. Collectively, the team can more easily move toward solutions.
 - **Go first.** If a team is taking turns presenting data, the teacher leader can offer to share his or her students’ work for team feedback first. If colleagues are offering mostly praise, the teacher leader can invite more specific, constructive observations such as, “Thank you for your positive comments. I’m concerned about the student’s problem here (indicate in data). What do you think I might do differently?”

3. RESPOND IN THE MOMENT.

Even if circumstances do not permit a teacher leader to be proactive, the teacher leader can still initiate slight moves in an existing conversation to shift to more rigorous collaborative discourse. Here are some suggestions:

- **Follow the team's lead and go deeper.** Although sharing successes and praise is not the ideal end result, it does put people at ease and can be a good launching point for a teacher leader. As people voice positive feedback, the teacher leader can probe them to think more critically about specifics by posing questions: "What do you mean by 'good'? Where in the student work do you see an example of this?" or "What specifically worked? How do we know? Why do we think it worked?" and "How can we replicate success with this student? How can we help other students in all of our classes achieve similar success?"
- **Focus on the dilemma, not the teacher.** Many protocols ask the presenting teacher to set forth a dilemma for the team to discuss, thereby creating a nonthreatening lens through which teachers can look. If the presenting teacher does not identify a concern, it could be because he or she is concerned that others will judge his or her teaching. To overcome this, a teacher leader can gently probe, "Why did you choose to share this student's work with us?" or "What concerns do you have about this student's work?" By writing the presenting teacher's dilemma on chart paper or repeating it for the team, the teacher leader can revert to the teacher's question, focusing the team to discuss the dilemma and not the teacher. For example, the teacher leader might say, "Can you find places in this student's work that confirm the presenting teacher's dilemma?"
- **Focus on students.** To invite rigorous collaborative discourse, a teacher leader can focus the discussion on student learning instead of instruction. For example, instead of asking, "What could the teacher do differently?" the teacher leader might ask, "What does this student need instructionally?" "What strengths and needs do we see in this student's work?" "What evidence in the student work demonstrates student understanding or confusion?" or "What next steps does this student need?" Focusing the discussion on students reduces any concerns of blame or judgment, and encourages the team to look more analytically, discuss more openly, and problem solve collaboratively.
- **Model curiosity, observation, and honesty.** Whenever individuals have a difficult conversation, it is best to begin from a stance of curiosity (Stone, Patton, & Heen, 1999). If the teacher leader can model wonder, data-based observations, and honest feedback, other team members will have unspoken permission to do the same. For example, if the team has been working on descriptive writing and sees some successful uses in the student work, the team leader can comb through the work looking for places that raise ques-

tions. The teacher leader might say, "I notice the student has a lot of descriptive language throughout her writing. She uses it effectively in paragraph two, but it seems repetitive in paragraph three. I wonder if this student knows when to include detail and when to go without."

The wondering brings the discussion to a safe but more critical level, allowing for others to build on the teacher leader's observation or feel comfortable expressing their own observations.

- **Redirect.** If all efforts to move the conversation beyond the culture of nice fail, the teacher leader may opt to redirect. For example, the teacher leader might say, "I've heard a lot of positives about the student work and teacher's instruction. With the time remaining, let's look to see if there are specific areas in which the students can improve. For example, I notice in paragraph two of the student essay ... (state positive), but then (identify problem). Does anyone else notice places where the students have this or other specific areas of need?"

Whenever individuals have a difficult conversation, it is best to begin from a stance of curiosity.

4. FOLLOW UP.

If team discussion about teaching and learning never moves beyond the culture of nice, individuals may gossip or vent after the meeting about what they really think. This behavior will breed a culture of not-so-nice, which will destroy any steps a team has made toward rigorous collaborative discourse. A teacher leader's response following team collaboration can take a pulse of the culture and sustain progress.

- **Debrief.** At the end of each meeting, have the team do a quick fist-to-five, in which team members raise up to five fingers indicating their assessment of the level of rigorous collaborative discourse achieved. Be sure to define it first. For example, a person would hold up his or her fist if he or she felt the team never moved beyond the culture of nice, one finger if there was an attempt at rigorous collaborative discourse, two fingers if it was somewhat achieved, etc. If major discrepancies in numbers occur, briefly invite people to voice their reasons and set a goal to improve at the next meeting. If someone voices a significant comment that could affect the team's future dynamics — for instance, if someone voices that they felt personally attacked — then mention that "this issue may need more time than we have allotted" and ask permission of the team to schedule time for a deeper debrief at the next meeting.
- **Give exit tickets.** Three useful questions teachers can answer on a half-page of paper as they leave are: What new thinking do you have? How might you apply it? How can the team and teacher leader support you?
- **Check in individually.** Follow up with one-on-one con-

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PEER? EXPERT?

TEACHER LEADERS STRUGGLE TO GAIN TRUST WHILE ESTABLISHING THEIR EXPERTISE

By Melinda Mangin and Sara Ray Stoelinga

Instructional teacher leaders strive to help teachers build knowledge and skills to improve teaching practice. With titles such as coach or coordinator, they may receive a stipend or released time from teaching. Instructional teacher leaders rely on an array of strategies to improve instruction and enhance student learning. They conduct professional development workshops, co-plan and model lessons, observe teaching and provide feedback, collect and analyze data, facilitate dialogue and reflective critique, and promote shared practices among teachers.

Despite the designation as leader, the instructional teacher leader's role is nonsupervisory. Teacher leaders do not evaluate teachers to determine performance-based promotions or sanctions. By maintaining their status as peers rather than supervisors, teacher leaders gain teachers' trust. The logic follows that teachers who trust the teacher leader will seek advice and assistance.

The nonsupervisory nature of the teacher leader role creates a paradoxical challenge for the teacher leader. In an effort to gain teachers' trust, teacher leaders de-emphasize their status as experts and avoid delivering hard feedback about teaching practice. Yet these actions ultimately undermine the work of improving instruction. How can the teacher leader be both a trusted colleague and a resource for instructional improvement?

Making teacher leadership an effective



tool for improving instructional practice depends on resolving this paradox. It requires a reconceptualization of the role, placing the teacher leader's expert knowledge at the center of the work. It also requires a school culture that embraces evaluation, collaboration, dialogue, and privatization as vital to the instructional improvement process.

PEER OR EXPERT?

To influence teaching practice, the instructional teacher leader must first establish trusting relationships with teachers. This becomes problematic, however, when teacher leaders downplay their expertise to maintain an identity as a trusted peer. De-emphasizing their expert status enables teacher leaders to comply with the norms of egalitarianism that characterize the teaching profession. Lortie (2002) explains that teachers view one another as equals except for differences in seniority and education. This egalitarian spirit is evident, for example, in teachers' rejection of pay-for-performance reforms, which seek to differentiate teachers

based on student learning outcomes.

Teacher leaders often adhere to this professional norm of egalitarianism, casting themselves as co-learners, rather than experts. In a study of teacher leaders, one math coordinator stated: "The staff understands that I'm not the be-all and end-all. I do the best I can. I take recommendations. I have days where I do something great (and) I have days where I don't; we talk about it" (Mangin, 2005, p. 470). This math teacher leader hoped to gain teachers' trust by downplaying his expertise. This is a common strategy used by instructional teacher leaders who draw on their peer status to gain and preserve teachers' trust and acceptance.

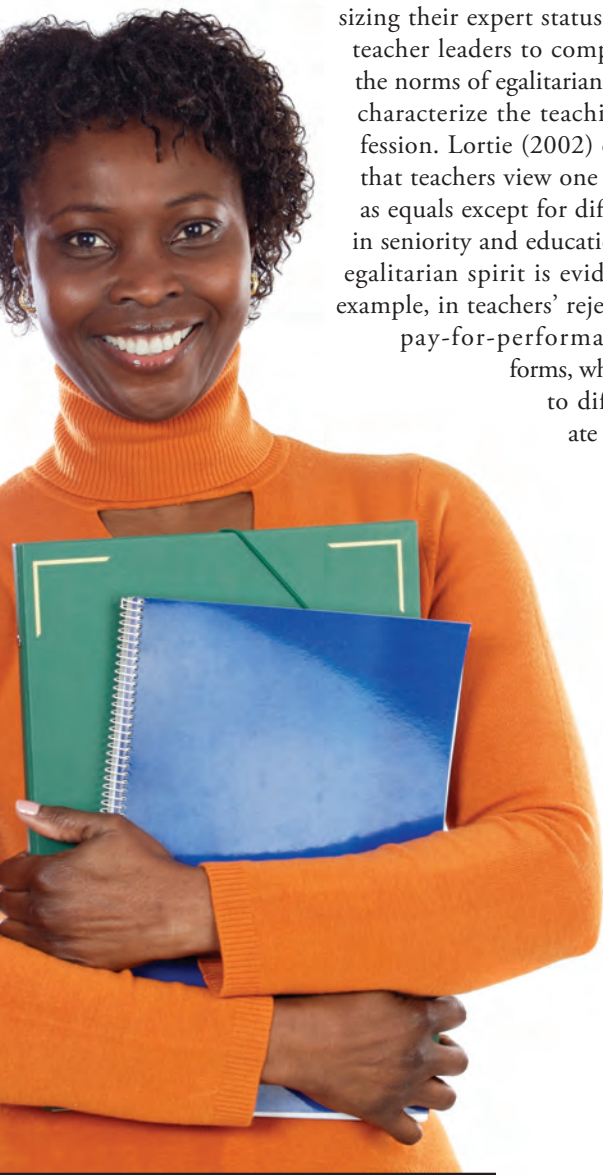
Ironically, the teacher leader's reluctance to cast herself as an expert can undermine others' perceptions of her ability to serve as a resource. If teachers view the teacher leader as lacking expert knowledge, there is little incentive to seek the teacher leader's advice or guidance (Mangin, 2005). While it may be true that teacher leaders are learning with and from teachers, their role as teacher leader presupposes some advanced capacity to guide teachers in the learning process. By describing themselves as nonexperts, teacher leaders unintentionally devalue their work and become a less desirable resource. As a result, the peer relationship on which teacher leadership is predicated can hinder instructional improvement. This doesn't mean that teacher leaders should reject the peer aspect of their work. Rather, what it means to be a peer must be redefined.

HARD FEEDBACK

When instructional teacher leaders emphasize their peer status, they also limit their opportunity to provide hard feedback to teachers. Educational researchers Brian Lord, Kate Cress, and Barbara Miller (2008) describe hard feedback as crucial to instructional improvement. They explain: "By *hard feedback*, we refer to instances where a teacher leader's honest critique of classroom practice is issued even though the critique actively challenges the teacher's preferred practice and may lead the teacher to experience some level of professional discomfort" (p. 57). Hard feedback is necessary to facilitate deep and sustainable changes in teachers' practice. While hard feedback may be integral to the improvement process, it threatens

PRIVATE PRACTICE

In *Schoolteacher* (1975), sociologist Daniel Lortie examines the norms and culture of the teaching profession. The book remains surprisingly relevant. Lortie describes the teaching profession as having unclear routines and inadequate ways to measure performance. Uncertain about how to understand their impact or effectiveness, teachers resort to a set of individualized instructional approaches shrouded in incoherent goals. As such, Lortie characterizes teaching as an isolated profession, in which teachers develop and enact their practice privately.



the teacher leader's status as peer, breaking with norms of egalitarianism, autonomy, and privacy.

As a result, rather than digging deeply into instructional practice in the classroom, instructional teacher leaders are more likely to provide assistance to teachers at a more superficial level. In her study of math teacher leaders, Mangin (2005) found that teacher leaders commonly provided “nonintrusive assistance — aimed more at helping teachers than changing their instruction” (p.470). These nonintrusive interactions, such as providing materials and resources, allowed teacher leaders to

PRACTICAL INSIGHTS ON TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Effectively employing teacher leaders to improve instruction is not always as intuitive as it seems. In *Examining Effective Teacher Leadership: A Case Study Approach* (Teachers College Press, 2010), Stoelinga and Mangin offer practical insights into the challenges that teacher leaders face and effective means for addressing those challenges. The accompanying teaching notes promote the self-reflection and critical thinking necessary to improve the practice of teacher leadership.

appear helpful and encouraging without being critical of teachers' instructional practice. While teacher leaders often describe such strategies as laying the foundation for delivering hard feedback, they are often unable to transform their role to include constructive criticism.

Transforming the teacher leader role to include hard feedback for teachers may be especially difficult because teacher leaders often lack experience providing feedback. Lord and colleagues (2008) explain: “In their prior work as classroom teachers, teacher leaders were unlikely to have observed or participated in giving hard feedback to other teachers or to have received

hard feedback themselves. Therefore, they had little to turn to in the way of experience and little to alleviate the reticence they felt at playing such an untried and potentially uninvited role” (p. 69).

Teacher leaders' experiences as classroom teachers do not prepare them to engage in the critical conversations about instruction necessary to promote improvements in teaching. Not only do teacher leaders avoid giving hard feedback in an effort to preserve peer status, they generally lack effective strategies to do so.

CREATE THE CONDITIONS

The success of instructional teacher leaders depends on establishing trusting relationships with teachers. To build trust, the teacher leader positions herself as a peer, unwittingly undermining her own authority to deliver hard feedback, which is key to instructional improvement. To create the conditions for effective instructional teacher leadership we must address this paradox directly and redefine 1) peer relationships, 2) the

improvement process, and 3) norms of teaching.

PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Foremost, we need to redefine peer relationships. Despite cultural norms of egalitarianism, teachers are aware of variations in teachers' instructional expertise. In his study of leadership in high schools, Jonathan Supovitz (2008) found that teachers sought advice from colleagues whom they perceived as having expertise in specific domains. While the egalitarian norms of teaching discourage teachers from identifying differences in colleagues' expertise, teachers seek assistance based on perceived variations in knowledge and skill.

Peer relationships must be reconceptualized to make room for teachers to lead in areas where they have strengths. This means acknowledging teachers' areas of expertise and utilizing teachers as leaders in instructional improvement. As such, formal structures must be put in place in schools to allow a broad base of classroom teachers to lead professional development, provide advice to peers, and share aspects of their practice that are exemplary. Similarly, it means positioning formal teacher leaders as experts with valuable knowledge to be shared.

IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Just as the relationships must change, so must the conversations. We must redefine the improvement process to include challenging but meaningful conversations about instruction, making nonpunitive collegial critique an accepted and expected part of teaching practice. Conversations intended to assess and address student and teacher learning needs should be a common component of teachers' interaction. While such conversations are inherently evaluative in nature, they should also be free from stigma, presenting all teachers with an opportunity to learn with and from one another. Creating structures, tools, and procedures for such conversations to become the norm is critical to effective instructional teacher leadership and improved instructional practice.

Importantly, difficult conversations will not take place if teacher leaders and teachers don't know how to have them. Instructional teacher leaders need training that will prepare them to ask deep questions and critique instructional practice in respectful yet meaningful ways. A recent study revealed that effectively asking meaningful questions of students is among the most challenging aspects of instructional practice for teachers. Principals similarly struggle to ask deep questions in their conversations with teachers about their instruction (Sartain & Stoelinga, 2011). Teachers, principals, and teacher leaders all need to learn how to ask critical questions that promote reflective thinking and discussion to improve practice.

NORMS OF TEACHING

Finally, changing peer relationships and promoting instructional improvement are contingent on transforming the cultural

context of schools. Foremost, schools must foster professional norms of collaboration, dialogue, and deprivatized practice. Joint work, built on expert knowledge and marked by interdependence, can change the long-standing culture of teacher autonomy and isolation. In turn, reduced autonomy and isolation encourages joint work (Little, 1990).

Inevitably, joint work requires trust. Bryk and Schneider (2003) explain that social trust is built on mutual dependencies focused on achieving shared goals. Deep social trust among teachers, parents, and students improves schools. As such, effective teacher leadership depends on building trust around the joint work of improving instructional practice. This stands in contrast to building trust by emphasizing egalitarianism and avoiding difficult conversations about practice. Schools must become places where the norms of teaching reflect an expectation that peers have the capacity and ability to engage in the joint work of effectively critiquing one another's instructional practice.

Challenging long-standing norms requires intentionally changing the nature of schooling to include new structures, tools, and procedures that facilitate instructional critique. It involves modifying school schedules to make time for teachers to observe and learn from one another and providing time to conduct pre- and post-observation conferences. It means developing new methods of observation such as videotaping and analyzing instructional practice in grade-level groups, applying rubrics to guide instructional critique, and developing templates with possible questions to pose following an observation.

In short, addressing the teacher leader paradox depends on changing schools. Far from a stand-alone reform, effective instructional teacher leadership depends on facilitating norms that open classroom doors, deprivatize practice, and foster instructional improvement. In redefining the peer relationship and establishing pathways for teacher leaders to be both trusted peers and instructional experts, we stand not only to deepen the

work of teacher leaders, but also to improve schools.

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When nice won't suffice

Continued from p. 47

versations to assess teachers' perceptions of how well the team engaged in rigorous collaborative discourse and how comfortable team members felt moving beyond the culture of nice.

TIME AND COURAGE

Teacher leaders who set goals, norms, and use protocols with their teams but skirt around the culture of nice will never achieve rigorous collaborative discourse. It takes skill to recognize the signs of a dysfunctional culture and courage to respond in ways that will lead to incremental shifts in thinking and behavior. Not every team member will shift at the same time, but every time a team leader experiences a moment of discom-

fort or uncertainty, that leader can be assured that he or she is shifting culture.

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WHY I WANT TO BE A TEACHER LEADER

By LaNaye Reid

If someone had asked me five years ago whether I would ever envision myself as a teacher leader, my answer would have been an emphatic “no.” My passion is for teaching and learning! I did not have the desire or the temperament to administer others. I had been in too many meetings in which the team leader began, “Now, let’s not shoot the messenger ...,” and I quite frankly believed that

a small stipend would never begin to make up for the extra hours and stress.

However, as educational transformation began in our district and on my campus, I began to see the role of teacher leader transform as well. This role was no longer an extension of a larger bureaucracy, but was becoming that of a facilitator among a group of professionals who held a shared vision. My campus principal began to make available learning opportunities designed to build capacity among teachers who were passionate about their work and

were open to a new mindset for how we conduct school business in the 21st century and beyond. These changes may have been incremental, but over time they have been powerful.

When I talk about educational change, I'm not talking about bureaucratic reform mandated and legislated through such acts as No Child Left Behind, but a groundswell of transformation that is slowly taking root and flourishing in pockets across the nation. Standard bearers such as Schlechty, DuFour, and Marzano have conceptualized this change in transforming schools from bureaucratic organizations to learning organizations. According to Schlechty (2006), "The bureaucratic model has outlived its usefulness. The model of a learning organization is much more apt for the challenges that now face public education and American society" (p.62). As a result, those in such learning organizations are transforming the roles of administrators and teacher leaders.

In the old, bureaucratic system of school, the teacher leader was a spokesperson for the principal, who was in turn a spokesperson for the district administration. This was trickle-down leadership, and the roles were typically assigned to the most tenured — those who had done their time and were now teachers of the highly coveted advanced and honors classes. Under this model, few ever achieved the role of team leader, which was an often-thankless job and was compensated with only a token stipend. The real value of the role was intrinsic. Unless one aspired to become a principal or district administrator, there was really no other way of moving up or gaining status as a professional educator.

What I've learned from my experience as part of this journey to work as a leader and learner in one of today's learning organizations is that today's teacher leader must develop a new skill set — and a new mindset that has as its core a passion for learning, a commitment to collaboration, and a shared vision of the organization.

PASSION FOR LEARNING

As members of a learning community, teacher leaders must be lifelong learners. As John Gabriel (2005) concisely states, "Leaders are both teachers and learners" (p. 4). Traditionally, knowledge was viewed as a relatively finite body of information that students needed to learn to be "educated." Therefore, a college degree and a teaching certificate were considered to be sufficient. After that, professional development was often limited to a few teacher workdays a year. Today, as we travel in the fast lane of the global information superhighway, that body of knowledge is growing exponentially. No matter what the content area, new discoveries and innovations are being made, and last year's knowledge is becoming as obsolete as last year's cell

phones. Our passion and enthusiasm regarding our respective areas of expertise give us an incentive to keep pace with current and emerging trends.

Continued growth and professional development are also critical because teaching is more than an art — it is a pedagogical science. At one time, teachers were disseminators of content knowledge to a somewhat captive audience. Progressive teachers introduced group work and made sure that the students stayed on task. However, 21st-century learners are not the traditional students of the days of "Leave It to Beaver." Today's teachers must be facilitators of learning with collaboration and engagement as the gold standard of best practices. Transformation from a more traditional teacher-centered classroom to a student-centered classroom can only take place with intentional professional development. It takes committed learning leaders to keep current with cutting-edge research in the methods to most effectively teach and reach today's digital natives.

One area of professional development that is similarly neglected is the intentional study of leadership, perhaps because some consider leadership an intuitive process that springs from natural ability. Also, we still hold on to vestiges of the idea that only administrators are leaders, not teachers. On the contrary, all teachers are instructional leaders. The classroom is a learning community led by the teacher, which in turn is a microcosm of the school as a larger learning community led by administrators and other teacher leaders. Not only do teacher leaders need to study leadership to hone their own skills, but to also develop leadership capacity among their team members. The resources for leadership development are endless. Educators can learn leadership principles not only from other educational leaders, but also from those in the private and public sectors who have developed valuable insight through their experiences.

The technological advances that we use for 21st-century learning in the classroom are also effective tools for leadership. Online professional development conducted through blogging, webinars, and more expand collaborative opportunities not only with teacher leaders on our campuses or in our district, but also with leaders in other parts of the nation and even internationally. Learning communities are indeed without boundary.

COMMITMENT TO COLLABORATION

As teachers, we no longer leave our department meet-



This is an incredibly exciting time to be a teacher leader. As district and campus administrators begin to see the untapped potential of teacher leadership and begin to build capacity in their teacher leaders, there will be a renewed sense of professionalism and passion.

— *LaNaye Reid*

ings to return to our rooms and close the doors behind us. We no longer communicate in terms of “my students” and “your students,” “my lesson plans” and “your lesson plans,” or “my tests” and “your tests.” Rather we collectively plan, with each teacher having a role and bringing something of value to the table. Together we disaggregate student data, looking for trends and asking, “What is working, and what is not?” When we share

As the teacher has become a facilitator in the classroom, so the teacher leader has become a facilitator in the professional learning community.

teams of students, we create a culture of mutual accountability and success. As John Gabriel (2005) states, “Collaborators evolve into learning partners, equally invested in each other and in improving achievement” (p. 110).

This paradigm shift from top-down, authoritative administration to a learning organization is built on the concept of interdependence and collaboration. As the teacher has become a facilitator in the classroom, so the teacher leader has become a facilitator in the professional learning community. Even though it is clear that col-

laboration enhances the effectiveness of a learning organization, changing the culture of isolation and independence is not a task for the fainthearted. It takes tenacity and wisdom to confront these entrenched practices. In his work *Motion Leadership: The Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy*, Michael Fullan (2010) speaks of the importance of building relationships over a period of time in order to affect this type of cultural change. He adds, “The idea is to maximize trust and effectiveness in order to reduce resistance to a minimum” (pp. 67-68). When we approach our team members as partners, when we learn their strengths, when we listen to their frustrations, we become mentors and coaches instead of supervisors. Just as teachers learn from students, we as leaders continue to learn and grow from our peers.

SHARED VISION

Finally, teacher leaders must know and be committed to the learning organization’s beliefs and vision. It sounds simple: Collaborate, formulate a vision statement, and bring everyone onboard. The challenge, though, is to communicate that vision clearly so that all stakeholders perceive it in the same way. My campus principal led our leadership team and staff through an exercise that illustrates this point. She read us a scenario of an adult handing a child a snack, and instructed us to sketch our mental picture. Even though the “vision” was the same, each person had a unique interpretation of its meaning. Some saw the “adult” as a caregiver, some as a parent, and others as a teacher. For some, the snack was an ice cream cone, while for others it was an apple, and so on.

As teacher leaders, we must clarify that our perceptions of the campus vision align with one another, and with the campus administration. It is similar to a political administration

in which all spokespersons must stay on message. If we do not get the message, or even worse, do not believe in the message, we run the risk of becoming “energy vampires,” as Jon Gordon (2007, p. 73) puts it, rather than creating energy that moves the organization forward.

Our staff followed up our visioning activity by creating paired statements in the form of concrete actions that define the culture of our school as a learning community. One such statement was, “We provide students with quality work that is engaging. We do not fill a child’s day with busywork.” Now when we meet in our professional learning communities, the guiding question becomes, “Does this support the campus vision?” This ensures that our team goals align with the campus vision and goals, which become the standard by which priorities are set and conflicts are resolved. Rather than having competing programs and departments, there is a unity of purpose. It is crucial that teacher leaders facilitate their peers’ capacity to see this larger picture.

A FUTURE DIRECTION

This is an incredibly exciting time to be a teacher leader. Transformation is beginning to take hold and flourish, even in the face of sometimes daunting challenges. Although teacher leaders have made tremendous strides professionally, the journey has only really begun. As district and campus administrators begin to see the untapped potential of teacher leadership and build capacity in their teacher leaders, there will be a renewed sense of professionalism and passion. As Schlechty (2001) describes, “Shared leadership . . . is less like an orchestra, where the conductor is always in charge, and more like a jazz band, where leadership is passed around . . . depending on what the music demands at the moment and who feels the most spirit to express the music” (p. 178). Teachers, pick up your instruments and join the music.

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SMART PARTNERS

TEXAS DISTRICT TRANSFORMS LEARNING THROUGH GOALS AND COLLABORATION

By Rick Albritton, Terry Morganti-Fisher, Jan O’Neill, and Sigrid Yates

Four years ago, Gilmer (Texas) Independent School District Superintendent Rick Albritton saw a pressing need. A rural district with 65% poverty, Gilmer was known for producing students who excelled in extracurricular activities but did not do as well academically. A year earlier, in an effort to encourage teachers to work together and to provide time for the many district and campus initiatives, the district provided teachers with 50 minutes of planning time daily in addition to 45-minute conference periods — a costly investment. But teachers didn’t use the time effectively because they didn’t know how to work collaboratively. Albritton was determined to change that. “I didn’t exactly know how, but I knew I had to find an answer,” he said.

Albritton’s quest took him to an institute by Anne Conzemius and Jan O’Neill, co-founders of QLD and co-authors of *The Handbook for SMART School Teams* (Solution Tree, 2002) and *The Power of SMART Goals* (Solution Tree, 2005). Albritton discovered QLD’s “turbo” meeting skills, which seemed to provide an answer for better use of planning time.



Photo by JAN O’NEILL

Vanessa Lowrey moves cards representing third graders through zones. The Gilmer, Texas, teacher has since moved to another district.

With Albritton’s encouragement, curriculum director Sigrid Yates led a district team to the institute, where she discovered two concepts that seemed even more critical than meeting skills:

- “Initiativitis,” which O’Neill describes as “everyone working very hard on multiple initiatives, spending lots of time in professional development, but failing to get desired results”; and
- Tracking students’ progress on SMART goals using color-coded zones.

“We had provided hours and hours of staff development,” Yates said. “All of those professional development plates were spinning, and we were working hard to keep them from falling. That was our problem. We lacked the structure to focus professional development, and we had failed to give teachers time to implement. We were expecting the impossible from our teachers and ourselves.”

Yates understood that writing a SMART goal was not enough to improve achievement, but when she saw QLD’s system for monitoring progress, everything came together. Yates and her team learned that the SMART goals process goes far beyond improving collaboration time. Ultimately, it builds shared responsibility for student learning at the student level.

Albritton and Yates saw that they needed a solution that aligned with Gilmer’s continuous improvement philosophy, and, just as important, that would not be just one more attempt at systemic change. “We knew we couldn’t do it all,” Yates said. “And we wanted a partner who would help us build capacity. QLD seemed to fit our needs.”

After deep dialogue with Albritton, Yates, and others in the district, the QLD team saw that, in addition to aligned and updated curriculum, formative assessments, and collaboration time, a number of intangible success factors were also already in place:

- A cohesive board with a shared vision of excellence whose members trusted Albritton and Yates;
- A seasoned curriculum director (Yates) who was knowledgeable about Learning Forward’s standards, Texas standards, and assessment policies and best instructional practices; and
- An instructionally focused superintendent (Albritton) who understood the difficulty of accomplishing deep systemic change.

Gilmer and QLD agreed that the primary goal was to build leadership capacity so that when QLD left, the SMART goals process would be so embedded in Gilmer’s culture it would be “the way we do things around here.” Structures, systems, and



A 7th-grade Gilmer student sets goals in math.

policies would support ongoing implementation and monitoring. Gilmer’s administrators, principals, and teachers would own the change.

The district and QLD saw the need for a multiyear, collaborative partnership built on openness and candor. It was important for those in the district to understand that QLD’s consultants weren’t coming in as experts who would be solely responsible for planning and implementation. Nor would they be just another set of hands responsible for implementing activities the district planned. Rather, their role would be collaborative, as Peter Block (1981) describes: “The key assumption underlying the collaborative role is that the [client] must be actively involved in data gathering and analysis, in setting goals and developing action plans, and finally, in sharing responsibility for success or failure” (p. 21).

Early on, the relationship was a challenge for teachers and principals. However, as elementary principal Connie Isabell noted, “We had to figure it out. We had to roll up our sleeves. And because of that, we had ownership over what we discovered.”

A strong partnership between district and consultant is based on trust, which grows over time. A respectful communication style was key to building and maintaining trust. QLD’s consultants were careful to frame their comments as suggestions, e.g. “This is just an outsider’s perspective, but have you considered...?” The QLD team also built trust by validating prior knowledge, listening without defensiveness, and adjust-

GETTING SMART ABOUT GOAL SETTING

QLD defined the SMART goal concept for educators using these words.

S=Specific and strategic

M=Measurable

A=Attainable

R=Results-based

T=Time-bound

Learn more about the process and find useful templates and tools in the November/December 2007 issue of *Tools for Schools*, available at www.learningforward.org/news/issueDetails.cfm?issueID=219.

Year	Campus	Campus ratings
2005-06	Elementary Intermediate Junior high High school	All acceptable
2006-07 First year Gilmer ISD experimented with SMART goals on its own	Elementary Intermediate Junior high High school	Unacceptable Recognized Acceptable Acceptable
2007-08 First year of contract with QLD	Elementary Intermediate Junior high High school	Recognized Acceptable Acceptable Acceptable
2008-09 Second year of contract with QLD	Elementary Intermediate Junior high High school	Recognized Acceptable Acceptable (missed Recognized by 2 students and 2 questions) Acceptable (missed Recognized by 1 student)
2009-10 Third year of contract with QLD	Elementary Intermediate Junior high High school	Recognized (anticipated, based on scores) Acceptable (anticipated, based on scores) Recognized (anticipated, based on scores) Exemplary (anticipated, based on scores)

ing plans to fit Gilmer's needs. For example, the junior high school had begun implementing the SMART goals process the previous year and had learned important lessons along the way. QLD welcomed their voices and adjusted learning and coaching to match where they were on the journey.

Some of the most powerful trust building came through the work of the steering committee, composed of central office administrators, principals, and teachers. Meeting four times a year and facilitated by QLD's Terry Morganti-Fisher, the committee monitored and guided implementation and recommended adjustments to the system. The steering committee used QLD's multifaceted SMART Solution Measurement System to evaluate implementation data on process, leadership capacity, and student results. Because the committee consisted of those responsible for implementing the process at the school level, a collective responsibility for districtwide implementation emerged. For example, the steering committee responded when it was discovered that items on the district benchmark assessments weren't measuring what was needed to monitor progress on a SMART goal. The items were immediately revised. Such highly responsive actions went a long way toward building trust throughout the district.

The most important trust builder was the success of the SMART goals process. During the first year, student results

RESULTS BRING TRUST IN PROCESS

When at-risk students began coming to school motivated learn, and bored high achievers began to re-engage and refocus, Gilmer's teachers and administrators truly began to trust the SMART goals process.

The Texas Education Agency, Texas' state education department, rates schools and districts as unacceptable, acceptable, recognized, or exemplary. Eighty percent or more of every student subpopulation must meet standards in every subject area and at every grade level for a campus to be recognized, 90% must meet standards to be exemplary. From a capacity-building perspective, seeing the positive results from the SMART goals process (summarized in the table above) was a powerful motivator for teachers, administrators, and board members.

improved on all campuses. The real breakthrough began in the second year and deepened in the third year as students began analyzing their own data, setting and monitoring their own SMART goals and adjusting their strategies to increase the rate of progress.

In alignment with Learning Forward's standards, QLD

focused professional learning support on ongoing implementation. Yates and Albritton attended every learning session so that they could provide knowledgeable support related to organization and instruction. Their participation was critical, signaling to the organization that this is most important.

Learning sessions were held on-site and focused on building capacity of school leadership teams (principals and teachers) to lead the SMART goals process on their campuses. Each session was followed by on-site and virtual coaching, guided by an evidence-based rubric that informed the team and QLD coach about where the campus was in the process and where it needed to go next. Leadership teams learned how to establish a strategic focus by analyzing their school data to determine the greatest area of need to be addressed by their SMART goals. Teams learned protocols for identifying the most promising instructional practices in alignment with their SMART goals and adopted processes for engaging teachers in deciding how to learn those practices. They also learned how to track student progress on their SMART goals by using zone analysis, positioning students in one of four zones after each assessment, then sharing the results with students so they could set their own goals.

Capacity building and progress monitoring extended to the board. The board of trustees and administrators met annually with O'Neill and Morganti-Fisher to review their return on investment through the lens of QLD's SMART Solution Measurement System evaluation tool. The group could see that the SMART goals process was responsible for teachers improving their professional practice. By the end of the third year, it was also clear that the process was becoming institutionalized.

At the campus level, professional learning was ongoing as daily teacher-led team meetings focused on which students needed help, which students needed to be more challenged, and how teachers could help each other. "We're all listening to new strategies and figuring out together how we'll use them in our classrooms," said veteran teacher Penny Wise. "And now we all share between disciplines. If I find something that's working, I share it now. It's no longer about my kids, or those kids — it's about our kids."

Classroom teachers began reporting that students who had never experienced success at school were now focused, engaged, motivated, and willing to keep trying to achieve their learning goals. Teachers experienced the same excitement. Greg Watson, the high school principal, said, "Goal setting is just the normal way we do business now."

Building capacity was always the goal, and involving everyone in the process helped achieve systemic change. During the third year, QLD consultants trained six internal coaches to continue supporting the SMART goals process. There are structures, resources, processes, and systems in place to sustain and leverage the professional learning QLD brought to the district. Now Gilmer ISD is fully equipped to continue the process.

The steering committee, with new members, has been renamed the 2010 Team. The 2010 Team continues to ensure focused implementation throughout the district, meeting quarterly, listening to teachers and principals, adjusting support as needed. The team will use the SMART Solution Measurement System to measure depth and breadth of implementation, and meet annually with the board of trustees and administrators to share results. Team members will continue to build their knowledge of continuous improvement by applying the tools from *The Handbook for SMART School Teams*. The district has hired a principal who retired this year to coach the campuses and work with the six internal coaches. A new principal will learn the SMART goals process by attending training outside the district.

Based on feedback from new and veteran teachers, new teacher orientation is being redesigned to cover less but go deeper into SMART goals and progress monitoring. Teacher teams will then be responsible for their professional learning during the year, as they meet to formulate goals, monitor progress on the zones, and adjust strategies. Principals will meet with their teachers to help develop professional learning goals and plans based on their specific student needs. Board members have officially renewed their commitment to support the process. When it's time to bring on new members, the board will actively support candidates who share their vision and commitment. While there will inevitably be changes at all levels, a core belief system has been fully developed to sustain the process.

Gilmer board member Jeff Rash says, "Results look phenomenal. Not only do we have state-of-the-art facilities, we now have a great academic program. All the best teachers want to work where they're appreciated and recognized for their work, where they have good facilities and great success, where they're not frustrated all the time. Our academic success is going to help our recruiting. Now we'll get to pick from the cream of the crop. That helps sustain this process for generations to come."

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Summer Reading List

School might be out for the summer, but your professional learning doesn't have to take a break. Check out these staff selections for great summer reading.

CHANGE, LEAD, SUCCEED: BUILDING CAPACITY WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Linda Munger & Valerie von Frank

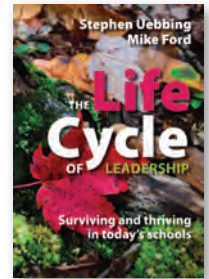


Redefine leadership in your school, and create capacity through school leadership teams that successfully coordinate professional learning. *Change, Lead, Succeed* shows school leaders and teachers in leadership roles what they need to know to effectively create a culture for change. NSDC, 2010

B468, 150 pp. + CD-ROM, \$40.00 members, \$50.00 nonmembers

THE LIFE CYCLE OF LEADERSHIP: SURVIVING AND THRIVING IN TODAY'S SCHOOLS

Stephen Uebbing & Mike Ford



The challenges of leadership come in distinct cycles of survival, creation, and legacy, according to the authors. Learn to recognize the challenges of each cycle and be ready to adjust your leadership to match your context using research-based strategies. Understand how a clear moral purpose can enhance every leader's ability to lead effective change. Learning Forward, 2010

B487, 166 pp., \$28.00 members, \$35.00 nonmembers

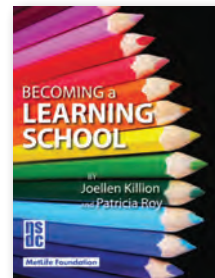


UNMISTAKABLE IMPACT: A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH FOR DRAMATICALLY IMPROVING INSTRUCTION

Jim Knight

Evidence shows that our schools are not as effective as they should be. This book simplifies the process for becoming an Impact School through targeted, consistent professional learning that is done *with* teachers, not *to* teachers. Award-winning author Jim Knight describes how to translate staff members' joy of learning into high-leverage practices that achieve dramatic student outcomes. Corwin, 2011

B488, 336 pp., \$40.00 members, \$50.00 nonmembers



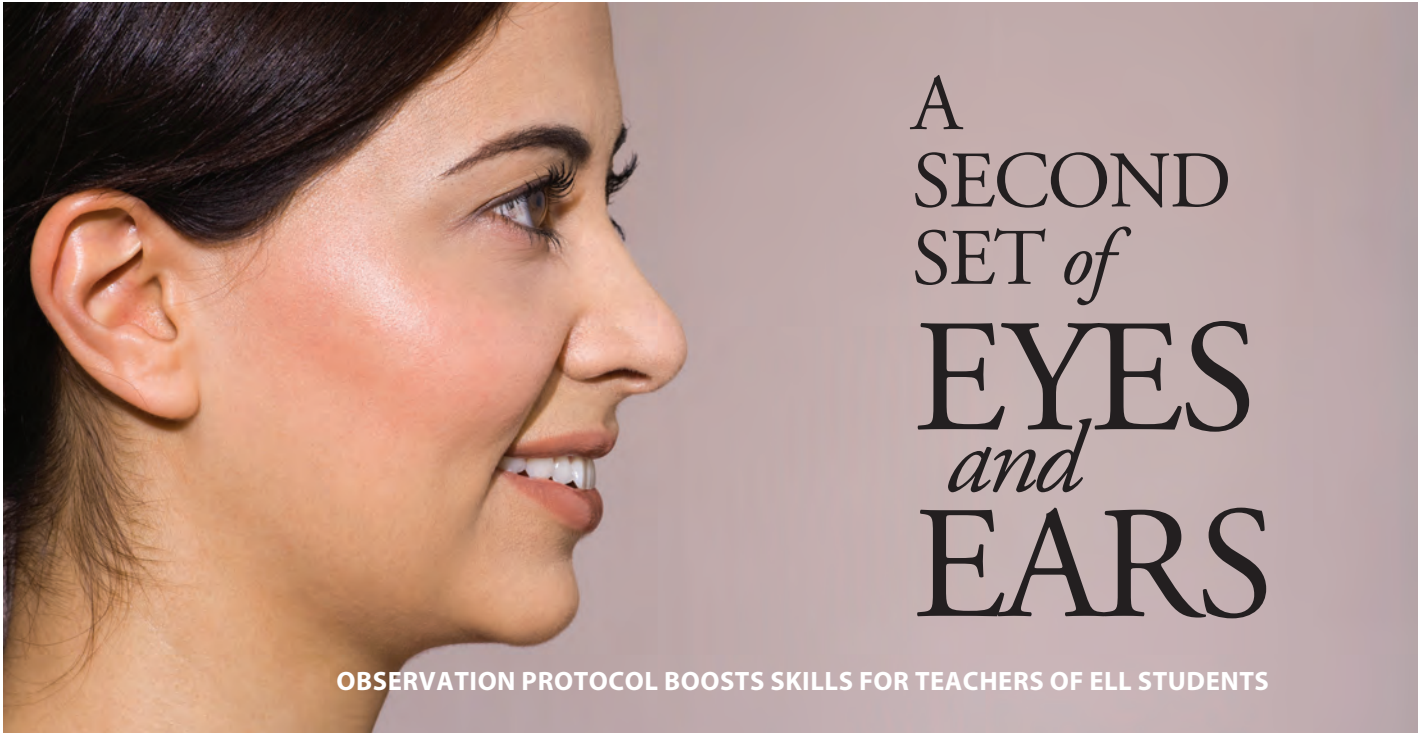
BECOMING A LEARNING SCHOOL

Joellen Killion & Patricia Roy

From setting the stage to engaging the community in understanding the purpose of collaborative professional learning teams, this volume covers what leaders need to know to implement more effective professional learning. An accompanying CD includes nearly 500 pages of tools. NSDC, 2009

B423, 177 pp. + CD-ROM, \$48.00 members, \$60.00 nonmembers

Check out these titles and many more at www.learningforwardstore.org or call 800-727-7288 for more information.



A SECOND SET *of* EYES *and* EARS

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL BOOSTS SKILLS FOR TEACHERS OF ELL STUDENTS

By Vicky Giouroukakis, Audrey Cohan, Jacqueline Nenchin, and Andrea Honigsfeld

In a large suburban school district with a growing English language learner (ELL) population, teachers were often heard asking the rhetorical question, “How do I help children who do not speak a word of English?” To create a solution, the district approached faculty at a nearby college seeking partners to provide professional development to teachers in grades 6 and 7 (for a total of six middle school teams) to help them address the needs of their ELL students. According to Zeichner, “While federal and state policies have placed increasing demands on teachers, professional development opportunities focusing on the education of ELLs have not kept pace” (as cited in Gebhard & Willett, 2008, p. 42).

THE NEED FOR PARTNERS

In the previous year, one member of the faculty presented in-depth workshops on content-based ELL strategies using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, also known as the SIOP model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008), to provide a comprehensive lesson planning and

delivery system. These workshops offered content and language support and enhanced ELLs’ academic and linguistic development. Although beneficial, the district wanted to take this professional development one step further and provide ongoing, classroom-based professional development to build on what the teachers learned.

After the initial workshops, the district recognized that there was a need for extended, classroom-based professional development with a team approach by faculty members with expertise in TESOL (Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages) teacher preparation. Thus, the district partnered with a team of graduate education faculty at a neighboring college representing multiple content areas with diverse teaching backgrounds able to offer high-quality professional learning.

CLASSROOM-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The intent of the professional development was to equip content teachers with strategies and skills to help ELL students become successful. The external partners perceived their role as the teachers’ eyes and ears, to com-

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOOL

General feedback	Feedback specific to working with ELLs	Examples/comments
Clarity of lesson objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content objectives Language objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary • Form 	
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections to ELLs' prior knowledge and experience or • Building background knowledge 	
Lesson delivery and sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the lesson follow a predictable sequence? • Are the ELLs able to follow along with the lesson? • Instructional scaffolding: teacher modeling, guided practice • Monitoring and ensuring student understanding 	
Reading activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading strategies for ELLs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prereading • During reading • Post-reading • Adapting text 	
Differentiation of instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaffolded and tiered activities • Use of technology to promote content and language learning • Use of varied, appropriate, and motivational instructional aids 	
Student engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELL participation • Students' comfort level at asking for clarification 	
Questioning techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions matched to ELLs' language proficiency levels • Increased wait time • Eliciting responses from ELLs • Questions that require critical thinking 	
Teacher talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical props (gestures, pantomimes, graphics) • Simplified but not unnatural talk • Repetition and paraphrasing • Rate of speech 	
Cooperative learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings with a purpose • Use of pairing of speakers of the same language • Use of pairing of a native English speaker with an ELL 	
Assessment techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiation of assessment for ELLs • Accommodations 	
Supplemental help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra help before or after school for ELLs • Mentoring of ELLs 	

Source: Based on Allen and LeBlanc's collaborative peer coaching model (2005).

municate with them about what was occurring in their classrooms that they did not necessarily notice, and to discuss how their observations could be used to better serve ELL students. Serving as the teachers' eyes and ears would prompt discussion and suggestions about how best to meet the challenges facing their diverse students.

By design, the professional development benefited not only ELLs, but also students with special needs and *all* learners in need of differentiated instruction. The external partners provided support and practical, meaningful suggestions for teachers to use in their classrooms. The professional development occurred in a risk-free environment in

which teachers felt comfortable voicing their concerns, needs, and frustrations. Teachers perceived the external partners as their advocates and gradually learned to trust them. This reflects the positive relationship between social trust and teaching success as described by Fisler and Firestone (2006).

This classroom-based professional development, highlighted in the research, provides content-specific feedback to individual teachers and involves working within their classrooms to make new ideas part of their daily routines. This model is often cited as most effective in terms of enacting instructional change

(Joyce & Calhoun, 1996; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Hirsh, 2009).

NEXT STEPS

The school will sustain the work of the partnership through these strategies:

1. Continuation of classroom-based professional development with follow-up.
2. More combined team meetings.
3. Potential for co-teaching.

During the initial visits, external partners held informal conversations with teachers about the broad picture of ELL instruction, acculturation, and linguistic needs in the district. They asked about teachers' perceived instructional

needs and then began regular classroom observations. As observers, external partners took notes on the physical environment, materials used, lesson delivery, student response, and other factors, pointing out positive elements as well as making general suggestions for improving ELL instruction. Teachers felt challenged, possibly because they felt that they lacked skills, knowledge, or training to meet these students' needs, especially beginner ELL students, while also meeting the needs of the rest of the class.

THE NEED FOR A CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOOL

The external partners needed a common classroom observation tool to standardize teacher feedback. They agreed that a common language was necessary to communicate with the administration and teams. A common language would also allow teachers to collaborate with each other after the professional development ended. Teams consisted of content teachers, teaching assistants, ELL teachers, and sometimes the inclusion teachers.

The external partners adapted a classroom observation tool that was based on second language acquisition theory, research-based instructional practices for ELLs, Allen and LeBlanc's (2005) collaborative peer coaching model, and Honigsfeld and Dove's (2010) work on general education and ELL teacher collaboration. This protocol is in chart form (p. 61).

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOOL AND TEAM MEETINGS

The most important structure for this professional development — team meetings in which the classroom observation tool could be shared and discussed with teachers — had al-

ready been in place in the middle school. Designated periods allowed external partners to meet with teachers in a group each day and discuss pedagogical concerns about lesson planning, instructional delivery, and ELL assessment. These discussions were critical and allowed teams to share best practices as well as their challenges and how they overcame them.

External partners used teachers' successful strategies to springboard into specific suggestions about ways to further improve instruction, not just for the ELLs, but for all learners. They noted that teachers responded well to hearing about each other's successes, and this created a positive and supportive learning environment. Additionally, they believed that when teachers realized that this was a no-risk experience, they began to generate questions and share concerns about their ELL students' linguistic needs, while reflecting on their own practices.

After working with teachers during team meetings, external partners were impressed by the value of this shared period and noticed three strengths of this powerful use of time in the middle school. This common work period:

- Values teachers and their efforts to improve instruction;
- Fosters the sharing of concerns about individual students who are at risk of academic failure or may need to be further engaged or challenged; and
- Allows teachers to share content knowledge and pedagogical expertise.

Team meetings consisted of rich discussions about issues that teachers face when teaching ELLs and finding ways to address those issues. Topics included cultural and linguistic differences, differentiation of instruction, adaptations, research findings on best practices for ELLs, language-sensitive content instruction, and teaching suggestions for the individual content areas of math, science, English, and social studies.

BENEFITS OF THE EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIP

The professional development yielded several positive results, including:

- Raising teachers' cultural awareness and consciousness. Teachers demonstrated cultural sensitivity gained through the learning. They became more aware of the cultural needs and differences of ELL students and tried to involve these students in lessons. They asked for input from ELLs, learned about ELLs' culture, family history, and home life, and grouped them with non-native as well as native speakers for classroom work;
- Encouraging teachers to reflect on their individual practice, especially as it concerned ELLs, and how to improve instruction to be more culturally and linguistically responsive while also academically challenging; and
- Increasing teachers' awareness of strategic instruction by enhancing the use of strategies that they had been using all along as well as by implementing new effective strategies for ELLs.

The extent to which implementation took place varied. However, teachers implemented specific changes, including:

- Cooperative learning techniques, such as jigsaw and partner work;
- More visuals and graphic organizers that present content in a more accessible way;
- Additional materials, such as bilingual glossaries, dictionaries, and textbooks;
- Modifications in the presentation of materials;
- Written scaffolding, including sentence starters, cloze exercises, word banks, essay templates, mentor texts;
- Practice assessments in students' native languages;
- More simplified oral and written language; and
- Structured, scaffolded explanations of directions or assignments.

KEY FINDINGS

Based on formal and informal conversations with all constituents and ongoing observations, findings suggest the professional development resulted in both broad and discrete changes to enhance teaching and learning for ELLs.

1. External partners found that a level of differentiation was needed for teacher learning as well as student learning. Bowgren and Sever (2010) recognize that teachers are learners as well and that a “district’s staff can be as diversified as any classroom of students” (p. 44). With that in mind, they considered the differentiation of teacher learning as they met with teachers individually and referred to the notes recorded on the classroom observation tool. These one-on-one meetings offered the opportunity to give specific feedback regarding instructional planning and effective implementation of lessons.
2. Modified textbooks and materials as well as multicultural resources will enhance the content learning of ELLs. For example, grade-level textbooks are available by the same publisher in a simplified version at a lower reading level, which is more linguistically accessible to ELLs and to students with special needs while presenting the same content. Web sites about teaching ELLs, such as www.culturegrams.com, and other pertinent materials should be an integral part of every teacher’s multicultural tool kit.

COMMITMENT TO GROWTH

Educational researchers acknowledge that the quality of schools’ professional development helps to explain the commitment to or lack of responsibility for the success of English language learners. Furthermore, middle schools that have sustained, coherent, ELL-focused professional development provide opportunities for growth to all teachers and administrators (Walqui et al., 2010). Classroom-based professional development allows teachers to learn in context, which is the most effective learning because it is specific — customized to

the situation — as well as social — involves the group (Fullan, 2001). The strong model of success exemplified by the college-school partnership described above — including the classroom-based professional development and the classroom observation tool — has the potential to assist middle school teachers as they work toward positive academic achievement of English language learners.

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The right facilitator can help teachers make meaningful change to their instructional practice

Educators who read our column often ask whether we would be willing to provide diversity professional development in their schools and districts. When we ask what makes someone think we would provide the kind of professional development they need, our authorship of this column comes up as the reason. While we work with teachers and school leaders to help them develop cultural proficiency and we think we do a pretty good job of that, we are not the best choice in every case. Selecting a diversity professional developer requires consideration of several factors.

EXPERIENCE AND CREDENTIALS

Because the need to create culturally responsive schools is so great, there is no shortage of people who offer diversity professional development. Many of these professional developers are outstanding and can help educators develop cultural proficiency to better serve students and families. However, there are also people who are willing to provide services but lack the knowledge and skills to be effective professional developers for educators.

Diversity professional development is a need not only in education, but in other fields as well. While certain elements of diversity learning cut across all fields, there are also distinct differences. To be effective, diversity professional development must address the specific context of the field and

must be delivered by someone who understands the field well enough to help professionals connect learning to practice. For educators, this means selecting a professional developer who has the knowledge and experience to help teachers make meaningful change to their instructional practice. Therefore, the first step in selecting a professional developer is to find someone within the field of education.

However, simply having a background in education does not make someone an effective diversity facilitator. Professional developers for cultural proficiency should have experience as practitioners in diverse educational settings. While educators can learn much from reading about diversity in the classroom or studying its effects, the most effective diversity professional developers are those who have actually done the work. Such experience gives professional developers insight that cannot be gained through other means. It also gives them credibility with educators who sometimes question whether anyone

understands what it is like to be in highly diverse classrooms.

DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Diversity professional developers use varying approaches, each with particular benefits and limitations. Which approach is best depends on teachers' goals and needs.

Introductory

An introductory approach focuses on increasing awareness about the need for cultural proficiency. This approach often includes presentation of data on shifting demographics and the effects of longstanding educational inequities. Participants may be asked to engage in activities that stimulate surface-level conversation and insights and help participants see the systemic need for cultural proficiency without challenging participants to consider how their own beliefs and practices may be contributing to the inequities. Although a few participants in introductory sessions may feel uncomfortable, most find it informative, perhaps even

In each issue of *JSD*, Sarah W. Nelson and Patricia L. Guerra write about the importance of and strategies for developing cultural awareness in teachers and schools. Guerra (pg16@txstate.edu) is an assistant professor and Nelson (swnelson@txstate.edu) is an associate professor in the Department of Education and Community Leadership at Texas State University-San Marcos. Guerra and Nelson are co-founders of Transforming Schools for a Multicultural Society (TRANSFORMS). Columns are available at www.learningforward.org/news/authors/guerranelson.cfm.

entertaining. These kinds of sessions work well as an initial step in developing cultural proficiency because they can be done with large numbers of participants and do not tend to create tension or conflict. When well done, an introductory session stimulates interest in more in-depth learning about diversity.

Introductory sessions are the most popular approach for diversity professional development because they are easy to implement and allow schools to meet systemwide goals of ensuring all teachers and school leaders have participated in professional development in diversity. These benefits are also the limitations of the introductory approach. Because the introductory approach focuses only on raising awareness, introductory sessions help teachers understand the need for change, but do not push teachers to consider the implications for their own instructional practice. As a result, introductory sessions rarely lead to changes in classroom practice. In this way, introductory sessions may help districts meet the goal of providing systemwide diversity training without having any effect on student learning.

Direct

The direct approach focuses squarely on challenging personal beliefs and exposing biases and prejudices. This approach assumes that whether educators are aware of it or not, they hold problematic beliefs that lead to inequitable practices and that the best way to address such beliefs is by confronting them head-on. Direct sessions are often characterized by very pointed discussions intended to surface underlying tensions, conflicts, and biases. Such conversations tend to be emotionally charged and create discomfort among participants. The feeling of being exposed or vulnerable

is not uncommon. Direct sessions often have a lingering effect in the school as participants process their feelings of discomfort.

Creating discomfort is an intentional tool in the direct approach. The idea is that change only occurs when educators are sufficiently uncomfortable to confront real issues. The direct approach is most effective for educators who already have an established understanding of cultural proficiency and want to push themselves to think deeper about issues of equity and diversity. The direct approach is also effective with educators who have entrenched deficit beliefs and are resistant to other approaches. However, for educators who are open to learning but have little background in cultural proficiency, the direct

approach may be too intensive. In fact, using the direct approach with well-intentioned but uninformed educators can cause educators to resist further efforts to develop cultural proficiency. For this reason, while the direct approach can be powerful, it should be used with caution and only with participants for whom it is appropriate.

Constructivist

A constructivist approach assumes participants have varying levels of cultural proficiency and will develop cultural proficiency at different rates. Constructivist sessions are characterized by engaging activities and discussions that build on the existing knowledge and experience of participants. The constructivist approach relies on development of collegial relationships to bring about self-reflective learning that leads to change in instructional practice. For this reason, the constructivist approach tends to be used in professional development offered as a series of sessions over time and with relatively small groups of participants.

This arrangement allows for a high degree of trust and interaction among participants and facilitators and is what makes the constructivist approach the most likely to impact classroom practice and student learning. However, because the constructivist approach requires a significant commitment of time and engages a relatively small number of participants, it does not lend itself to systemwide goals of providing diversity training to an entire faculty in a short period of time. The constructivist approach is better suited to the goal of steady progress over time, and when done well results in more effective classroom practice and increased student outcomes.

SELECTING AN APPROACH

Knowing which approach to select requires analyzing the needs of the organization and the participants. Questions to consider include:

- Why is the professional development needed? Is this to fulfill a systemwide goal of training for large numbers of people in a short period of time or a more focused approach aimed at systemic change?
- What are expected outcomes for participants?
- Is this a first effort, or have participants engaged in previous professional development? What are participant sentiments about diversity professional development?
- Will there be additional opportunities for professional development?
- In what ways will district staff support participants after professional development?

In our next column, we will discuss these questions in more depth because selecting the right diversity facilitator is key to a successful professional development initiative. The right facilitator can help teachers move forward toward creating more culturally responsive learning environment. ■





Tackle challenges and build relationships using tools for meaningful conversations

Does this ever happen to you? You're having a conversation and, at some point, you realize that your soul has left the building, along with your attention. This can happen when you're talking with someone you truly care about. Stranger still, sometimes the person who is doing most of the talking is you, and you've still checked out. You're neither insensitive nor uncaring. You're just bored. Your thought is, "been there, done that," and you have — the same topic, the same conversation, the same result. While there is room for chitchat in our lives, most of the time, if we're doing it right, both of us will be influenced, both of us will be different as a result of our conversations. The conversational model I love most is Mineral Rights. Angela Brooks-Rallins has put this conversational model to excellent use.

— Susan Scott

By Angela Brooks-Rallins

As director of recruitment for Perspectives Charter Schools (in Chicago), I had been responsible for the selection and hiring process for all of our open positions in five schools and one central office. We were opening one new school and adding students to an existing middle school and high school. I took my challenge seriously, as I wanted the best teachers in front of our students. Taking note of staff turnover, I thought to myself, what commitments are we not honoring to our teachers that is making them want to leave? I started going into classrooms and noticing how our teachers were teaching. I saw teachers who deeply cared about their students' success, yet I also saw power struggles with students. Teachers had dark circles under their eyes, and their body language sent a

message of fatigue and apathy.

As a former teacher with a passion for developing teachers, I decided to run a pilot program for improving classroom culture. This would include learning sessions on building relationships with students, engaging students as leaders in the classroom, and building values into teaching. I started a biweekly mentoring program that would address these and other topics teachers wanted us to address.

I had recently read *Fierce Conversations* and taken a two-day workshop, and the statement that most resonated was the push to "tackle your toughest challenge today." This focus would drive our meetings. I vividly remember my first staff encounter. It was January, high burnout time for educators. During our first meeting, we each shared the commitments we were making to ourselves to grow

and to each other about how we could best support each other. The meeting was a huge success as we each shared what was in our hearts. Some participants had hope, some had fear, some had frustrations, but all of us had determination and the drive to improve our school's culture. We left the initial meeting with action steps to take and reflect upon for the next meeting.

After a few meetings, I began to build wonderful relationships with the teachers. One teacher's spirit in particular really captured my heart. Jill Walker was the kind of person everyone loved being around. She was positive, energetic, and so loving. She adored kids, all kids. One day I popped in to see how Walker was doing. With a look of defeat and tears in her eyes, she said to me "I'm done, Angela. I don't want to teach anymore. I quit." My heart sank. My first thought was

In each issue of *JSD*, Susan Scott (susan@fierceinc.com) explores aspects of communication that encourage meaningful collaboration. Scott, author of *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success At Work & In Life, One Conversation at a Time* (Penguin, 2002) and *Fierce Leadership: A Bold Alternative to the Worst "Best" Practices of Business Today* (Broadway Business, 2009), leads Fierce Inc. (www.fierceinc.com), which helps companies around the world transform the conversations that are central to their success. Fierce in the Schools carries this work into schools and higher education.

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THE MINERAL RIGHTS CONVERSATION: COACHING

An excerpt from the Fierce Conversations Field Guide for Teachers

How many times have you started a conversation with someone on one topic and quickly veered off course, making little if any progress on the main issue?

Imagine you're drilling a well to get to water. You're more likely to encounter water by drilling one 1,000-foot well rather than 1,000 one-foot wells. As you drill the 1,000-foot well, imagine changing drill bits to get through different levels and types of sediment that the bit encounters. When you approach a conversation using the Mineral Rights model, you are similarly drilling deep, going layer by layer, staying with one topic, asking questions that move the conversation deeper to what's at the core.

When you and your colleagues, or you and your students, engage your collective curiosity by asking questions, your conversations become far richer. Students may be surprised at the insights they come to on their own and at the answers that lie within themselves.

The less successful alternative in a coaching conversation is to take the traditional role of the expert — to dispense advice. Consider a teacher who starts counseling a student who is having problems and whose behavior has recently changed. The teacher is impatient and doesn't take the time to dig into the

issues with the student, to identify what's really going on. The teacher doesn't ask her many questions because he feels his role is to give students advice and provide answers.

The student's dependency on the teacher increases. Her ability to think for herself decreases. Her curiosity and motivation to change diminish. The teacher, meanwhile, still hasn't identified the root cause of his student's behavior and his energy is drained, because the student's behavior doesn't change and the problems continue.

This is an excerpt from the *Fierce Conversations Field Guide for Teachers*. Conversations are your most powerful tool. Available as part of a whole-school rollout program through Fierce, the guide is meant to put at a teacher's fingertips a set of pragmatic strategies and activities that will embed Fierce Conversations frameworks in the day-to-day work they already do, the work of instructing and managing their classes.

Now imagine the teacher tackles the situation in a way that helps his student identify the real issue behind her behavior. Rather than advising, the teacher asks questions, mines for greater clarity, seeks improved understanding, and creates the impetus for action. He helps the student explore her emotions around the issue, her contributions to the issue, the prices she and others are paying, and the likely outcomes if nothing changes. As a result, the student is far more likely to feel a sense of urgency and commit to action.

When you take the time to dig deeper by asking your students and colleagues questions, you facilitate conversations

that engage your own and others' curiosity in a productive way, while getting to the root cause of an issue. You enrich your relationships, because people know that when you ask questions, you're really asking and really listening.

to go into motivator mode and say, "You are amazing, you can do this, and this is how..." I paused briefly to think about what she really needed at this moment, and then went into Mineral Rights mode. "What is the most important thing we should be talking about today?" I asked. As she talked, we continued, digging deeper and deeper. Eventually she had another class coming in, and this conversation had to come to a close. Walker had identified her main concern and how she was going to move forward for the next meeting with the group. See box above to read more about Mineral Rights coaching.

That particular pilot group had

meaningful conversations and built strong relationships. I look now at the teachers who were all feeling unsuccessful at the time, and I see the most remarkable educators, teachers I would want for my own children. I see how they've used the tools we learned about to solve their pressing challenges. I asked this group what made our pilot group so successful. They felt that identifying one key issue at a time helped them focus and define action steps to solve the issue. The questions that I asked helped facilitate thinking, which helped more than me telling them what to do or how to resolve their issue. They spoke about the tone of our conversations, how we talked to

and with each other. They remembered that when they didn't keep their commitments, we had a confrontation conversation.

Walker and I still speak frequently. She said something recently that would make any coach's heart fill with joy: "You made me want to change. You valued our relationship, which built trust. You created a place for us to voice frustrations, a clear space to think and solve problems. I would not be the teacher I am today without you." Walker does not realize that I learned from her as well. I would not be the leader I am today without having her in my group. ■

A bold move forward:

Consortium outlines new standards for teacher leaders.

By Joellen Killian

No school or system will succeed based on the leadership of a single hero leader. Deep change requires all parties to work collaboratively, and teacher leaders are vital to establishing a collaborative school culture. Explore Learning Forward's commitment to developing and supporting teacher leaders through the lens of several foundational principles.

Model standards advance the profession.

By the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium

Read key excerpts from the recently released Teacher Leader Model Standards, designed to codify and support teacher leadership. These standards can be used to prepare experienced teachers for leadership roles and to reinforce higher education's role in preparing preservice teachers to become members of professional learning communities.

5 stages on the path to equity:

Framework challenges urban teachers' deficit thinking.

By Sonia James-Wilson and Michele Hancock

A partnership between the Rochester (N.Y.) City School District and the University of Rochester led to an urban teacher leadership academy that emphasizes equity as a means to improved student results. Researchers developed a five-stage empowerment trajectory as a framework for sustaining teacher leadership development programs.

Boston shifts learning into high gear:

Certificate program accelerates student learning by building teacher capacity.

By Jill Harrison Berg, Lesley Ryan Miller, and Phomdaen Souvanna

A partnership to develop teacher leaders in Boston Public Schools ties professional learning directly to district priorities. The Boston Teacher Leadership Certificate capitalizes on the expertise of Boston's experienced teacher leaders to bolster the system's capacity to accelerate learning for all students.

TAs join the team:

UK expands role of teaching assistants in the classroom.

By Jill Morgan and Betty Y. Ashbaker

In the United Kingdom, a 2003 National Agreement has allowed teachers to devote more time to teaching and learning, and at the same time opened up more roles for teaching assistants to support teachers. These changes have had an impact on classroom teachers and the leadership roles they play.

A ladder to leadership:

Ohio steps up to strengthen teachers' collaboration and coaching skills.

By JoAnn Hobenbrink, Marlissa Stauffer, Ted Zigler, and Angela Uhlenhake

With Ohio's new teacher career lattice that includes teacher leader as one of the top tiers, teacher leadership is in the spotlight at district and state levels. Supported by the Ohio Department of Education and The Wallace Foundation, educators at Ohio Dominican University instituted a pilot program for a teacher leader endorsement.

When nice won't suffice:

Honest discourse is key to shifting school culture.

By Elisa MacDonald

Teacher leaders carefully guide teachers beyond polite interactions to create safe and productive learning environments. Teachers must be willing to expose their struggles and failures with their colleagues, and colleagues must be willing to tell the truth, or teams will go through the motions of collaborative inquiry but never see results.

Peer? Expert?

Teacher leaders struggle to gain trust while establishing their expertise.

By Melinda Mangin and Sara Ray Stoeltinga

The nonsupervisory nature of the teacher leader role creates a paradoxical challenge. To gain teachers' trust, teacher leaders de-emphasize their status as experts and avoid delivering hard feedback, but this undermines the work of improving instruction. How can the teacher leader be both a trusted colleague and a resource for instructional improvement?

Why I want to be a teacher leader.

By LaNaye Reid

A teacher in Texas chronicles her journey to leadership. Among the lessons she learns along the way is that today's teacher leader must develop a new skill set as well as a passion for learning, a commitment to collaboration, and a shared vision of the organization.

call for articles

Theme: Implementation
Manuscript deadline: Aug. 15, 2011
Issue: April 2012

Theme: Communities of learners
Manuscript deadline: Oct. 15, 2011
Issue: June 2012

Theme: Data
Manuscript deadline: Dec. 15, 2011
Issue: August 2012

- Please send manuscripts and questions to Tracy Crow (tracy.crow@learningforward.org).
- Notes to assist authors in preparing a manuscript are at www.learningforward.org/news/jsd/guidelines.cfm.

features

SMART partners:

Texas district transforms learning through goals and collaboration.

By Rick Albritton, Terry Morganti-Fisher, Jan O'Neill, and Sigrid Yates

With the help of an external partner, Gilmer (Texas) Independent School District works to embed the SMART goals process into its culture so that it becomes “the way we do things around here.” Structures, systems, and policies support ongoing implementation and monitoring, letting the district’s administrators, principals, and teachers own the change.

A second set of eyes and ears:

Observation protocol boosts skills for teachers of ELL students.

By Vicky Giouroukakis, Audrey Cohan, Jacqueline Nenchin, and Andrea Honigsfeld

University partners equip content teachers with strategies and skills to help ELL students become successful through school-based professional learning and intentional follow-up. The external partners served as teachers’ eyes and ears, prompting discussions and suggestions about how best to meet the challenges facing ELLs.

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Cultural proficiency:

The right facilitator can help teachers make meaningful change to their instructional practice.

By Sarah W. Nelson and Patricia L. Guerra

Selecting a diversity professional developer requires consideration of several factors.

Collaborative culture:

Tackle challenges and build relationships using tools for meaningful conversations.

By Susan Scott and Angela Brooks-Rallins

To reduce teacher turnover, a concerned educator works to improve the culture of her district.

From the director:

Encourage teachers to step up to leadership roles.

By Stephanie Hirsh

We need to look around and be deliberate about inviting teachers to serve in leadership roles.



coming up
 in August 2011 *JSD*:
 New standards for
 professional learning

Joellen Killion transitions to new role

Joellen Killion, deputy executive director of Learning Forward, will retire from her full-time position at the end of August. Killion's dedicated leadership in the organization has taken many forms over the past 20 years. She served six years as a board member beginning in 1991, two years as a contract employee, and 12 years as a full-time staff member. She will continue to serve Learning Forward in the capacity of senior advisor.



Joellen Killion

"It is certainly with mixed emotions that we announce this news," said Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh. "Joellen has dedicated her passion and energy to Learning Forward 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I'm happy that she'll be able to do the same for her family and her writing. At the same time, we'll miss her skillful leadership and expertise. She has been at the center of this field for a long time, and she has earned the respect of so many educators at all levels."

"While I am stepping away from my responsibilities as deputy executive director, I look forward to contributing to Learning Forward and the field of professional development

in many other ways," said Killion.

Killion led the most recent revision of the *Standards for Professional Learning* and will facilitate the revision of the standards support resources. She has extensive experience in professional development planning, design, implementation, and evaluation at the school and system level. Killion is a frequent contributor to newsletters and *JSD*. Her most recent books include *Becoming a Learning School* (NSDC, 2009) co-authored with Patricia Roy, *The Learning Educator: A New Era for Professional Learning* (NSDC, 2007) co-authored with Stephanie Hirsh, *Assessing Impact: Evaluating Staff Development* (Corwin Press with NSDC, 2008, 2nd ed.), and *Taking the Lead: New Roles for Teachers and School-Based Coaches* (NSDC, 2006) co-authored with Cindy Harrison.

"My commitment to the importance of educator learning is stronger than ever," Killion said. "Any change within education depends on educators' opportunities to learn the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions that are essential for the change to be successful. Educators' ongoing learning holds tremendous potential to ensure that every student achieves at the highest levels."

book club

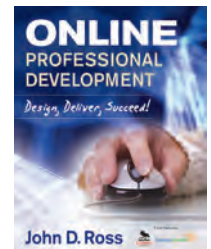
ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: DESIGN, DELIVER, SUCCEED

Although many educators are on the fast track to embracing online professional development, choosing the best solution is not as simple as pushing a button. Author John D. Ross's practical framework guides readers through asking the right questions and making sound development and purchasing decisions. The book's process is founded on proven principles of professional learning and instructional design. This reader-friendly guide provides a path to answering these fundamental questions:

- Why do I need online professional development?
- How much does it cost?
- How do I get started?

- What does high-quality online learning look like?
- What technologies are right for me?
- Did it work?

Included are a decision matrix, a step-by-step planning and implementation framework, buyer guidelines, and real-life case studies from successful online professional development providers.



Through a partnership with Corwin Press, Learning Forward members can add the Book Club to their membership at any time and receive four books a year for \$49. To receive this book, add the Book Club to your membership before June 15. It will be mailed in August. For more information about this or any membership package, call 800-727-7288 or e-mail office@learningforward.org.

powerful words



I am still learning. — Michelangelo



We need leaders to create a new tone for learning

I am disheartened that so many media pundits and political figures tend to lay blame on educators for our current budget shortfalls.

In their eyes, it is the fat-cat teachers who got us into this situation. These overpaid teachers with their three-month vacations who get health benefits and a retirement system (heaven forbid) are unacceptable. Let's resolve our economic woes, they insist, by lowering teacher salaries (and other workers in the social services), firing librarians, cutting the arts, and creating better teacher evaluation based solely on student test scores.

How did teachers become the scapegoats? I do not recall many teachers who were making money by approving bad loans, or who worked on Wall Street manipulating the financial system for millions in personal gain. I am appalled that teachers are maligned this way. I hear too much teacher blame in too many places. This is a time when we need our leaders — teacher leaders, that is — to speak up.

I only have to walk down the hall in my school to see how teacher leadership makes the difference. Mrs. Medlock shows up at 6:45 each morning, teaches well all day, and leaves at 6 each night. Parents are clamoring for their children

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Mark Diaz is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees.

on board MARK DIAZ

to be in her classroom. She is in her 60s and getting her master's degree because there is so much more to learn. She mentors teachers and shares her new knowledge at faculty meetings.

Ms. Farr, our ELL teacher, puts sparks in our students' eyes with her plays, her 101% attitude, and her photos of children in college shirts. Ms. Mara rejoices every day when one of her students discovers a new insight. She mentors, advocates, and is the soul of our school.

My work with teachers is not unusual. You can all list remarkable teachers, be they novices or those closer to ending their 12-hour-day careers. In many cases, you are the remarkable teacher.

I call out to those teachers: We need your voices. You have the skills, the passion, and the influence to change the political debate into a dialogue that does not demonize. We need you to create an environment for learning at a national level and beyond. Bring your leadership skills to the forefront.

Just ask basic questions, as you would with your students. Ask the CEO of a bank or corporation that accepted bailout money, or the politician clamoring for big cuts in social services, or the editorial writer at your local newspaper.

- How many children have you ever taught to read?
- How many teachers do you talk to every day who are striving to find the best way to reach their hardest-to-teach students?
- How many children have turned to you as someone safe during a crisis in their lives?
- How many children did you guide with a hands-on activity that



demonstrated the concept of the amount of moisture different soils hold?

- How many teachers thanked you for helping them engage their students on a daily basis?

Like any good teacher, when the folks you talk to don't have good answers, you have a responsibility to teach them. Explain how they can do better. Show your high expectations, and teach them to share your high expectations. That's what leaders have to do. ■



LEARNING FORWARD'S PURPOSE: Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.

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Seeking board nominations

Learning Forward members will elect two members to the Board of Trustees this year. Learning Forward requires that nominations be submitted by June 30.

To be eligible for nomination, individuals must be current on their membership and have been members for at least two years; have attended at least one annual conference; be employed in the field of education; and have not served on the board during the past two years.

The election will take place in September, and new board members will join the board at the conclusion of the 2011 Annual Conference in December.

Members interested in nominating themselves or other members for the board can learn more about the process at www.learningforward.org/about/elections.cfm.

LEARNING FORWARD COVERS HOT TOPICS IN EDUCATION WEEK

Learning Forward has begun publishing advertorials in *Education Week* with the organization's position on key topics and current issues. The first covered professional learning's role in teacher evaluation (download the PDF at www.learningforward.org/standfor/positions/advertorialeval_pd.pdf).

Upcoming topics include online learning, standards, and the role of external partners. All advertorials will be available on Learning Forward's web site in addition to being published in the print version of *Education Week*. The goal is to raise awareness about important professional learning issues to a wide audience.

Budget-friendly resources

In challenging financial times, Learning Forward is committed to helping its members find creative ways for professional development to thrive and maintain its focus on student learning. With careful planning and an investment in proven strategies and follow-up, members can gain great value from professional learning even when budgets are tight.

Learning Forward has created a collection of useful resources covering a wide variety of ideas and strategies in response to frequently asked questions. Explore the collection at www.learningforward.org/advancing/pdtoughtimes.cfm.

LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

- July 17-20:** 2011 Summer Conference for Teacher Leaders and the Administrators Who Support Them, Indianapolis, Ind.
- July:** Online registration opens for Learning Forward's 2011 Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif.
- Sept. 16:** Proposal deadline for Learning Forward's 2012 Summer Conference in Boston, Mass.
- Oct. 15:** Last day to save \$50 on registration for Learning Forward's 2011 Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif.
- Dec. 3-7:** Learning Forward's 2011 Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif.

DEMONSTRATION LESSON PLANNING PROTOCOL



One role teacher leaders may play is to offer demonstration lessons to support their teachers in understanding new instructional strategies. Follow these guidelines to plan and implement an effective demonstration lesson with peers.

<p>DETERMINE what specific skill, knowledge, attitude, or behavior you want to showcase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with teacher. • Identify from among a set of possibilities. • Follow an established plan. • Choose from among predetermined options. 	<p>TIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All demonstration lessons are equal work for you and the teacher observing. • The purpose of observing is learning. Amplify learning in the debriefing. • One or two demonstrations are great; three is too many. If you practice gradual release, you accelerate the teacher’s learning.
<p>PLAN how you will amplify what you will demonstrate in your teaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it visible. • Make it BIG. • Make it obvious. 	
<p>PREVIEW the lesson with the teacher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the lesson plan. • Co-develop the lesson plan. 	
<p>ASSIGN the teacher the role of observer with a data-gathering template.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the teacher know what to look for. • Encourage the teacher to watch the students more than you unless that is inappropriate. You want the teacher to see the interaction between what the teacher does and what students do. • Give the teacher an observation template or create one with the teacher. 	
<p>DEBRIEF the observation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the teacher to share what he or she observed. • Ask the teacher for data about the lesson’s impact on students. • Ask the teacher to identify the process, sequence, or strategy used in the teaching. • Encourage to teacher to identify the reasons the process, sequence, or strategy is successful with students. • Ask the teacher to identify a generalization about using the process, sequence, or strategy. 	

Source: Reprinted from *Taking the Lead: New Roles for Teachers and School-Based Coaches*, by Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison. NSDC, 2006.



Encourage teachers to step up to leadership roles

When The Wallace Foundation released a study on successful school leadership practices (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010), I noted particularly one insight from the research: These leaders did not act alone. The most effective principals shared leadership in very deliberate ways to ensure high levels of student learning. They counted on teacher leaders to assist them in clarifying their vision and leading their colleagues to achieve it.

While this realization seems obvious to some, to others it is new and startling. Some principals are not prepared in a way that helps them to create a vision for shared leadership. At the same time, some teachers are reluctant to consider their roles and responsibilities as school leaders. Schools will benefit when we can find ways to change both views.

A few years ago, we offered a session at our summer conference featuring elected and appointed leaders in professional associations. Panel members were invited to reflect on what they learned about leading that they wanted to pass on to others in the room.

I was surprised by a common element in the leadership stories of many panel members, as well as session attendees who shared their own experiences. Most of these highly

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Stephanie Hirsh (stephanie.hirsh@learningforward.org) is executive director of Learning Forward.

successful educators had not considered themselves leaders or offered their services until after their first experience with a formal leadership assignment or recognition of their potential. I was shocked to learn that while 100% of the session attendees came to classify themselves as leaders, more than 75% of them had not sought a leadership position or considered a leadership path until they were invited.

I have struggled to understand this perspective. And this year I saw it unfold with my daughter, a 3rd-grade teacher in the Richardson Independent School District. With the many ways she has tried to influence her school, I always assumed she would label herself a teacher leader. It never occurred to me she didn't see herself this way until I received an email from her one day. She forwarded correspondence between her and her principal, when she was asked to work with teachers in another grade level on math curriculum planning. At the bottom of the memo she wrote, "Hee-hee — I'm a teacher leader." She had not recognized all the actions she had taken to advance her professional learning community as leadership until she was asked to specifically take a leadership role by her principal. In my view, she is a teacher leader. I saw her acts as those of a leader, even though I realized later that she didn't share my view.

These experiences have taught me

not to assume that the individuals with the passion and capacity to serve as leaders are making themselves known to us. Rather, we need to look around and be deliberate about inviting teachers to serve in leadership roles. School systems can design teacher leader academies, and principals can make sure to regularly identify teachers to participate.

Everyone can take time to listen to colleagues' aspirations and make sure they are given the encouragement to step up and lead. Leadership is needed in many forms, from formal committee assignments to short-term task forces, from formal positional responsibilities to informal support as needed.

Few schools are successful with one leader. The most successful are places where everyone shares responsibility for the success of all students and steps up to lead when they have expertise to offer or a point of view they know they must share. In all cases, teacher leaders are key to the results we seek.

REFERENCE

Louis, K.S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K.L., & Anderson, S.E. (2010). *Learning from leadership: Investigating the links to improved student learning.* St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota & University of Toronto. ■



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Instruction for All Students PLC Pack

This PLC Pack provides your Professional Learning Community with content to improve student learning. There are 24 one-hour interactive and action-oriented learning experiences included. Based around the work in the book *Instruction for All Students* by Paula Rutherford, the PLC Pack will help you focus on learning and have you working collaboratively in no time!



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